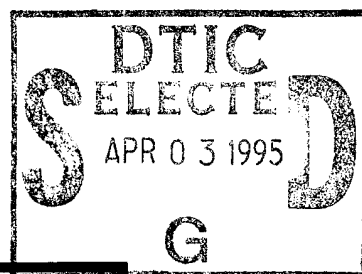


NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL MONTEREY, CALIFORNIA



THESIS



**NO-FIRST-USE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR DETERRENCE,
ALLIANCE COHESION, AND
NONPROLIFERATION**

by

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December, 1994

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NO-FIRST-USE:
IMPLICATIONS FOR EXTENDED DETERRENCE,
ALLIANCE COHESION, AND NONPROLIFERATION

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

While a U.S. no-first-use declaration might help promote some nuclear nonproliferation goals (for example, gaining a larger international consensus to support an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty), it could also undermine the credibility of U.S. security commitments and erode alliance cohesion. These developments could, in turn, increase the risk of nuclear proliferation. This thesis identifies and examines the relevant competing arguments and discusses the implications of a U.S. no-first-use pledge regarding three issues: deterrence, alliance cohesion, and nuclear nonproliferation. The thesis concludes that adopting a no-first-use policy would probably prove beneficial only in the short term and only in one respect: it might help the United States meet its stated objectives for the 1995 NPT Review and Extension Conference. The arguments in favor of adopting a no-first-use pledge fail to adequately consider the broader long-term implications, in particular the risk that this policy could undermine stability in Europe and the integrity of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. The potential shortcomings of the arguments on both sides of the no-first-use debate are highlighted, however. In view of these shortcomings, recommendations are made to help minimize possible negative political and military effects.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since the end of the cold war, increasing emphasis has been placed on re-defining the role of nuclear weapons in U.S. national security policy. No-First-Use (NFU) of nuclear weapons is one of several issues to emerge in the public forum. NFU has also attracted high-level attention among defense and foreign policy elite decision-makers. This includes several high-level officials within the Clinton Administration who, prior to assuming their current posts, argued for adopting a NFU policy. This analysis critically examines the arguments on both sides of the NFU debate, in addition to the potential consequences of a U.S. NFU pledge.

It is argued by an increasing number of analysts that there remains only one credible role for nuclear weapons: central deterrence. Some build on this argument to contend that it is time for the United States to take the lead in reinforcing a global norm against nuclear proliferation. To accomplish this, it is argued, the United States should issue a NFU declaration, accompanied by a withdrawal of the remaining U.S. nuclear forces deployed overseas. NFU champions maintain that a NFU declaration could also help to secure a larger consensus for indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) at the review and extension conference in April-May 1995 by giving non-nuclear-weapon states the security assurances they seek while diminishing the discriminatory nature of the NPT. A stronger, revitalized NPT would serve to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime.

Those opposed to adopting a NFU policy argue that the analysis of NFU proponents is short-sighted in that it fails to take into account the continuing importance of U.S. nuclear commitments and the vital role they play in maintaining peace and stability in Europe and other regions. A NFU pledge by the United States could send a signal of U.S. disengagement from Europe that could undermine the credibility of U.S. nuclear commitments, erode alliance cohesion, and precipitate instability in Europe. The result, some contend, could be a nuclear-armed Germany, which could incite further nuclear proliferation. A potentially unstable Europe along

with an increased risk of a greater number of nuclear-armed states, it is argued, would be a high price to pay for obtaining a larger consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT.

The thesis concludes that a decision by U.S. policy-makers to adopt a NFU policy based solely on the need to encourage developing countries to support the indefinite extension of the NPT would be shortsighted. Such a decision could severely damage America's relations with some of its closest allies. It would probably also increase the risk of nuclear proliferation, in contrast with the intended result. While several measures might be taken to help minimize the negative political and military effects of a U.S. NFU pledge, America's ability to afford and implement such measures is debatable. Moreover, such measures might prove to be insufficient to remedy all the harmful effects of a U.S. NFU pledge.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The end of the cold war has prompted many analysts to reevaluate the foundations of U.S. nuclear strategy. While it is certain that the threat environment has changed, it is less certain what the new threats are and what role exists for U.S. nuclear forces. The London Declaration of July 1990 heralded a shift in NATO's nuclear strategy toward a reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.¹ In September 1991, one month after the failed coup attempt in the Soviet Union, President Bush announced a series of sweeping, unilateral nuclear arms initiatives. These included the elimination of all ground-launched theater nuclear weapons, withdrawal of all tactical nuclear weapons from surface ships and attack submarines as well as nuclear bombs from aboard aircraft carriers, a stand-down of strategic bombers from their alert posture, and termination of the development of mobile Peacekeeper ICBMs.²

The January 1993 change in administration brought with it renewed efforts to align the U.S. nuclear posture with the realities of the post-cold war security environment. Several high-level officials within the Clinton Administration, prior to assuming their current posts, argued for adopting a No-First-Use (NFU) policy.³

¹"The London Declaration on a Transformed North Atlantic Alliance," NATO Transformed: The London Declaration, Selected Document No, 38 (Washington, DC, Bureau of Public Affairs, U.S. Department of State, 6 July 1990). Issued by NATO Heads of State and Government, the London Declaration (paragraph 18) reaffirms the essential role of nuclear weapons in NATO's overall strategy of preventing war. The declaration goes on to suggest that in a 'transformed Europe' nuclear weapons can be made 'weapons of last resort.'

²President George Bush, "Initiative on Nuclear Arms: Changing the Nuclear Posture." 27 September 1991, in Vital Speeches of the Day, 58 (1 November 1991): 34-36.

³See, for example, Les Aspin, "From Deterrence to Denuking: Dealing with Proliferation in the 1990s," Released by the House Armed Services Committee, February 18, 1992, 15-16; and Ashton B. Carter, William J. Perry, and John D. Steinbruner, A New Concept of Cooperative Security, Brookings Occasional Papers

This course has reportedly been ruled out for the moment.⁴ Nonetheless, considerable external pressure exerted by non-nuclear-weapon states for non-use assurances by nuclear-weapon states, in combination with the U.S. ambition of obtaining the largest possible consensus for an indefinite extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) are important factors in sustaining high-level interest in NFU. The main argument of this thesis is that while a U.S. NFU declaration might help promote some nuclear nonproliferation goals (for example, gaining a larger international consensus to support the indefinite extension of the NPT), it could also undermine the credibility of U.S. security commitments and erode alliance cohesion. These developments would increase the risk of nuclear proliferation.

B. OUTLINE SUMMARY

The purpose of this thesis is to assess the relationship between NFU and nuclear nonproliferation. Since the results of a NFU policy cannot be "proven" definitively in advance of its adoption, this thesis identifies and examines the relevant, competing arguments and discerns the implications of NFU for three issues: deterrence, alliance cohesion, and nuclear nonproliferation. The potential shortcomings of both sides of the NFU debate are highlighted. In view of these shortcomings, recommendations are made to help minimize their negative political and military impact on U.S. national security.

The thesis is structured to support these objectives. The remainder of this introductory chapter defines NFU and provides for a brief overview of the evolution of NFU. The overview considers the historical development of the competing issues in the NFU debate, in addition to the specific nature of the current debate. The discussion of the current debate includes a synopsis of the predominant views

Series, 1992, 12.

⁴R. Jeffrey Smith, "U.S. Keeps Nuclear Guard on Russia," International Herald Tribune, 23 September 1994, 1.

advanced by both sides of the NFU argument as well as three of the most prominent NFU alternatives.

The main body of the thesis is divided into three parts. Chapter II considers how the United States could further its nuclear nonproliferation objectives by adopting a NFU policy. Chapter III shows how adopting a NFU policy might affect the ability of the United States to meet its existing deterrence requirements. It is not the purpose of this analysis to postulate what role deterrence should play in the long-term, in the post-cold war environment. Therefore, the focus will be limited to the issues surrounding the role of deterrence in today's security environment. Chapter IV uses Britain as a case study to assess the impact of NFU on U.S. security and alliance commitments in Europe. Cultural influences and specific national security considerations may affect the ways in which a particular U.S. security partner would respond to a U.S. NFU declaration. However, when considering the potential negative implications of a NFU policy, an analysis of the NATO European case, and particularly of a staunch ally such as Britain, can be applied to a broader, global context. Chapter V examines two sets of policy implications for political and military decision makers based on whether or not a NFU policy is adopted by the United States.

C. NO-FIRST-USE

Dr. Fred Iklé, a former Director of the U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, defined first-use of nuclear weapons as "a defensive resort to nuclear arms in the event of an overwhelming conventional attack that U.S. Allied forces cannot turn back with conventional arms alone."⁵ In a statement presented before the House

⁵Statement by ACDA Director Iklé to the House Committee on International Relations on First Use of Nuclear Weapons, March 25, 1976, Documents on Disarmament, 1976 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 1978), 121. The idea of reducing the chances of a nuclear arms race by reducing the reliance on nuclear weapons to deter conventional war was first advanced by George F. Kennan in the late 1940's. For a more detailed historical account see Jerald A. Combs, "The Compromise That Never Was: George Kennan, Paul Nitze, and the

Subcommittee on International Security and Scientific Affairs on March 25, 1976, Dr. Iklé stated that instances where the United States could envision first-use of nuclear weapons had narrowed considerably, particularly since the Korean War experience. According to Dr. Iklé, this narrowing of first-use contingencies has also been precipitated by non-use pledges made in conjunction with nuclear-weapon-free zones in Latin America and the South Pacific, and by pressure from non-nuclear-weapon parties to the NPT for non-use commitments by nuclear powers.⁶ Instances in which a first-use of nuclear weapons could be foreseen were narrowed in some analyses to one important contingency: to counter a large-scale conventional attack against Western Europe which could not be successfully countered by NATO's conventional forces.⁷

Pressure for a NFU policy has come from antinuclear movements that were either not interested in or opposed to reliance on nuclear deterrence, and from defense analysts in favor of substituting conventional capabilities for nuclear deterrence. Several other factors influencing the U.S. NFU debate were China's unconditional NFU declaration in 1964, repeated Soviet NFU declarations,⁸ arms control endeavors

Issue of Conventional Deterrence in Europe," Diplomatic History 15 (Summer 1991): 361-387.

⁶Ibid., 121-122 and Fred Charles Iklé, "NATO's 'First Nuclear Use': A Deepening Trap?" Strategic Review 8 (Winter 1980): 18-19.

⁷Iklé, "NATO's 'First Nuclear Use'," 19; and Richard K. Betts, "Compound Deterrence vs. No-First-Use: What's Wrong is What's Right," Orbis 28 (Winter 1985): 714.

⁸For examples of official U.S. views on the credibility of Soviet NFU pledges, see the Statement by ACDA Director Rostow to the First Committee of the UN General Assembly on October 27, 1982, Documents on Disarmament, 1982 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, December 1985), 774; and News Conference Remarks by U.S. Ambassador Kampelman on September 14, 1984, Documents on Disarmament, 1984 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, September 1986), 685. Evidence supporting this U.S. perception has emerged in official Warsaw Pact military documents obtained as a result of German unification in October 1990. See Lothar Ruhl, "Offensive defence in the Warsaw Pact," Survival

such as the SALT, START and INF negotiations, and President Reagan's policy of "peace through strength."

Three of the most important milestones shaping U.S. attitudes toward a NFU policy were non-use of nuclear weapons pledges (i.e., negative security assurances) given to Latin American States party to the Treaty of Tlatelolco in 1971,⁹ Secretary of State Vance's statement in June 1978 regarding U.S. assurances on Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons, and an article written by four prominent American statesmen: McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara and Gerard Smith in the Spring 1982 issue of Foreign Affairs.¹⁰ As John Simpson and Darryl Howlet have noted, "the negative security assurances made by the U.S. in both 1971 and 1978 made exceptions for states either allied or associated with a Nuclear-Weapon state and who attacked the U.S., its territories or armed forces, or its allies."¹¹ In the words of Cyrus Vance, then the U.S. Secretary of State,

The United States will not use nuclear weapons against any non-nuclear-weapons state party to the NPT or any comparable internationally binding commitment not to acquire nuclear explosive devices, except in the case of an attack on the United States, its territories or armed forces, or its allies, by such a state allied to a nuclear-weapons

5 (Sept./Oct.1991): 442, 446.

⁹Proclamation by President Nixon on Ratification of Additional Protocol II to the Treaty for the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons in Latin America on June 11, 1971, Documents on Disarmament, 1971 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, February 1970), 311-313.

¹⁰McGeorge Bundy, George F. Kennan, Robert S. McNamara, and Gerard Smith, "Nuclear Weapons and the Atlantic Alliance," Foreign Affairs 60 (Spring 1982): 753-768.

¹¹John Simpson and Darryl Howlet, "The NPT Renewal Conference: Stumbling Toward 1995," International Security 19 (Summer 1994): 46. For additional discussions on both positive and negative security assurances see Kathleen Bailey, Strengthening Nuclear Nonproliferation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993): 87-95; and George Bunn and Roland M. Timerbaev, "Security Assurances to Non-Nuclear-Weapon States." The Nonproliferation Review 1 (Fall 1993): 11-20.

state or associated with a nuclear-weapons state in carrying out or sustaining the attack.¹²

Qualifications were included to reassure U.S. allies of the credibility of the U.S. nuclear umbrella and to ensure that Soviet satellite states were excluded.

The 1982 Foreign Affairs article was written to "start a discussion" on reducing NATO's reliance on nuclear weapons by adopting a NFU policy. According to the authors:

Given the appalling consequences of even the most limited use of nuclear weapons and the total impossibility for both sides of any guarantee against unlimited escalation, there must be the gravest doubt about the wisdom of a policy which asserts the effectiveness of any first use of nuclear weapons by either side. So it seems timely to consider the possibilities, the requirements, the difficulties, and the advantages of a policy of no-first-use.¹³

Of note, it was recognized that the balance of conventional forces would have to be restored prior to adopting a NFU pledge to compensate for the "uncoupling" of nuclear weapons from NATO strategy. This article stimulated an extensive policy debate on the issue of NFU, including a widely noted response by four distinguished Germans.¹⁴ The four German authors argued that NFU would undermine NATO's war-prevention strategy by removing the decisive nuclear risk from Soviet calculations, thereby increasing the risk of a Soviet conventional assault.

Since the end of the cold war, NFU has again become an issue over which a fairly intense public debate has emerged. Three principal explanations for renewed interest in considering a NFU policy can be identified. First, the Clinton Administration has opted to emphasize the nonproliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD). This, along with the decision to conduct a "comprehensive"

¹²" U.S. Assurance on Non-Use of Nuclear Weapons," Statement by Secretary of State Vance, 12 June 1978, in Documents on Disarmament, 1978 (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, October 1980), 384.

¹³Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith, 757.

¹⁴Karl Kaiser, Georg Leber, Alois Mertes, and Franz-Josef Schulz, "Nuclear Weapons and the Preservation of Peace: A German Response," Foreign Affairs 60 (Summer 1982): 1157-1170.

nuclear posture review, has brought nuclear-related issues, such as NFU, into the public forum.

Second, three key Clinton administration officials advocated, prior to assuming their official posts, that the United States should adopt a NFU policy. In February 1992, Les Aspin, while still Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, recommended that "in close consultation with our NATO allies, we should now reconsider this policy (nuclear-first-use), which may, if it remains intact, undercut our nonproliferation efforts by legitimizing nuclear weapons and nuclear use."¹⁵ Aspin served as Secretary of Defense until February 1994. William Perry, Ashton Carter, and John D. Steinbruner coauthored an occasional paper for the Brookings Institution in 1992. Their paper predicted that the end of the cold war would lead to an increasing deemphasis on the importance of nuclear weapons for security. "Doctrines covering the residual nuclear weapons - themselves much shrunken and simplified - would foresee retaliation only, and that only in response to first nuclear use and without automatic response."¹⁶ Perry is, of course, Aspin's successor as Secretary of Defense, while Carter serves as Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Policy.

Finally, the review and extension conference for the NPT is scheduled for April-May 1995. The United States is committed to obtaining the largest possible consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT. To achieve this, the United States has reportedly been considering several options, including NFU, that could help alleviate the perceived political and military discrimination of the NPT regime.¹⁷

Three positions can be identified in the current debate over NFU: those in favor, those opposed and those advocating some form of hedging strategy. Although there is some diversity in opinion among those in favor of a U.S. NFU declaration,

¹⁵Les Aspin, "From Deterrence to Denuking," 15-16.

¹⁶Carter, Perry, and Steinbruner, 12.

¹⁷Lewis A. Dunn, "NPT 1995: Time to Shift Gears," Arms Control Today 23 (November 1993): 19.

most NFU proponents agree that any U.S. NFU declaration should be made only after consultation with Alliance partners, and that the only time nuclear weapons use is acceptable is in retaliation for a nuclear attack on the U.S. or its allies. This last point is, however, disputed by those who suggest that a second nuclear use by the U.S. could help routinize nuclear weapons.¹⁸

NFU proponents argue that various benefits could be derived from adopting a NFU policy—for example, further delegitimizing nuclear weapons, improving the odds of achieving an indefinite extension of the NPT, and further isolating non-nuclear states inclined to seek nuclear weapons.¹⁹ In an August 1994 New York Times editorial, the question was asked, "what sense does it make to threaten a country (North Korea) with nuclear attack while trying to coax it out of nuclear arming?"²⁰

Those opposed to a U.S. NFU declaration argue that NFU calls into question the credibility of extended deterrence commitments to U.S. allies.²¹ In the European context, NFU may not only prove to be destabilizing to the Alliance, but may also fail to prevent the escalation it was intended to curb.²² One might also consider the case of China and India. China has had an unqualified NFU policy since 1964, yet one of the primary motivating factors behind India's 1974 "peaceful nuclear

¹⁸Lewis A. Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation: The United States and the New Nuclear Powers," The Washington Quarterly 17 (Winter 1994): 14.

¹⁹For more complete discussions of the potential benefits of a U.S. NFU declaration see Aspin, 14-15; Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation, 13-15; Dunn, "NPT 1995," 19; and Paul C. Warnke, "Strategic Nuclear Policy and Non-Proliferation," Arms Control Today 24 (May 1994): 5.

²⁰New York Times "Reassuring Non-Nuclear Nations," (August 16, 1994): A14.

²¹See Malcolm Rifkind, British Secretary of State for Defence, "UK Defence Strategy: A Continuing Role for Nuclear Weapons?" Speech given at the Center for Defence Studies, King's College, London (November 16, 1993): 5; and David S. Yost, "Nuclear Debates in France," Survival 36 (Winter 1994-95): 129-130.

²²Betts, p. 710, footnote 19.

explosion" was the threat posed by China's nuclear weapons.²³ A third argument points out that, while some explicit gradation in available response options is important for deterrence, NFU further limits those options.²⁴

Thomas Graham, Deputy Director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency (ACDA), states that "if you have in place negative security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon state parties to the NPT, the only thing no-first-use declarations add within the NPT context is a pledge among the five nuclear-weapon states not to attack one another."²⁵ Graham also pointed out the difficulty in achieving a five-party NFU declaration. It could be argued that anything less than a five-party NFU declaration (for example, if the U.S. were to unilaterally adopt a NFU policy) would be much less reassuring for non-nuclear-weapon states.

Several alternatives to an explicit NFU declaration have emerged. Three of the most prominent are "no-early-first-use," "defensive last resort," and "uniform deterrence of nuclear first use." No-early-first-use was proposed by Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith in their 1982 Foreign Affairs article as a more prudent means of dealing with the conventional force imbalance between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. The authors suggested that "such a policy might leave open the option of some limited nuclear action to fend off a final large-scale conventional defeat."²⁶ The

²³Devin T. Hagerty, "The Powers of Suggestion: Opaque Proliferation, Existential Deterrence, and the South Asian Nuclear Arms Competition," in Zachary Davis and Benjamin Frankel, eds. The Proliferation Puzzle: Why Nuclear Weapons Spread and What Results (Portland, OR: Frank Cass, 1993), 260-264.

²⁴Quinlan, Sir Michael, "The Future of Nuclear Weapons: Policy for Western Possessors," International Affairs 69 (July 1993): 490; and Thomas-Durell Young, "The Need for NATO-Europe's Substrategic Nuclear Weapons," Orbis 36 (Spring 1992): 233.

²⁵Arms Control Today Interview with Thomas Graham, Jr., 24 (July/August 1994): 12.

²⁶Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith, 762.

authors themselves dismissed the idea as a means of refining NATO's existing nuclear options and thereby avoiding a more decisive policy.

The concept of defensive last resort was introduced by McGeorge Bundy, William J. Crowe, Jr. and Sidney Drell in the Spring 1993 issue of Foreign Affairs.²⁷ The authors assert that while conditions exist today which are conducive to a NFU policy, the future remains uncertain. Thus, defensive last resort is able to adjust to today's security environment while still providing a hedge against any future nuclear danger. Also noted by the authors is the presumed acceptability of the doctrine to both announced and unannounced nuclear-weapon states worldwide. In particular, the doctrine coincides with both the defensive nature of the NATO alliance and the 1990 London Declaration's explicit reference to nuclear weapons as weapons of "last resort."

Uniform Deterrence (UD) was introduced in 1993 by Robert Levine as part of a RAND study on avoiding nuclear war.²⁸ The concept of UD is based on the axiom that deterring the use of nuclear weapons by anyone should be the number one global priority. Levine suggests that a UD policy might be worded as follows:

It is the policy of the signatories to this statement that any state using nuclear weapons in warfare for any purpose other than responding to nuclear use, or sponsoring or knowingly harboring groups using such weapons, will be punished by appropriate military action.²⁹

Two shortcomings of UD are that it would be least effective against nuclear-weapon states, and that U.S. public opinion would probably not accept the risks associated with being the global nuclear policeman. Moreover, the "appropriate military action"

²⁷McGeorge Bundy, William J. Crowe, and Sidney Drell, "Reducing Nuclear Danger." Foreign Affairs 72 (Spring 1993): 140-155.

²⁸Robert A. Levine, Uniform Deterrence of Nuclear First Use (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 1993).

²⁹Ibid., viii.

is undefined, and the pledge is similar to that in a Wilsonian collective security pact against an unidentified aggressor-with all the practical flaws of that approach.³⁰

NFU has become an increasingly important issue since the end of the cold war. It is also a highly contentious issue that has not disappeared, despite reports of President Clinton's September 1994 decision for the United States to retain a nuclear first-use option. During the same week that President Clinton endorsed the findings of the Nuclear Posture Review, the Indonesian delegation to the third session of the NPT preparatory conference issued a statement on behalf of the "Group of Non-Aligned and Other States" outlining what they considered to be the substantive issues to be considered by the preparatory committee.³¹ One of the concerns addressed in the statement was unconditional security assurances for non-nuclear-weapon states. Specifically, "In the context of an acceptable balance of mutual responsibilities and obligations, it is the primary right of States Parties to the NPT to be assured of non-use and threat of use of nuclear weapons. Nuclear Weapons States Parties should agree to a legally binding instrument on this issue before the 1995 Conference." A separate document submitted by Columbia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Mexico, Myanmar, and Nigeria at the same NPT preparatory conference session suggested "full security assurances to non-nuclear weapon states" as one means for strengthening the NPT regime.³² As the time for the NPT Review and Extension

³⁰See Inis L. Claude, Jr. Power and International Relations (New York: Random House, 1962) for a critical analysis of collective security arrangements, as well as his recent study "Collective Security After the Cold War," in Gary L. Guertner, ed. Collective Security in Europe and Asia (Carlisle Barracks, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, 1992).

³¹Document on the Substantive Issues Submitted by Indonesia on Behalf of the Group of Non-Aligned and Other States, submitted to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, 14 September 1994.

³²Document submitted by Columbia, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran (Islamic Republic of), Mexico, Myanmar and Nigeria, submitted to the Third Session of the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons, Geneva, 9 September 1994.

Conference approaches, it will become imperative for the United States, along with other nuclear-weapons states, to respond. The United States must weigh the implications of adopting a NFU policy in advance.

II. NONPROLIFERATION CONSIDERATIONS

As indicated in the introductory chapter, the arguments advanced by NFU proponents focus on the potential for strengthening the nuclear nonproliferation regime by further marginalizing nuclear weapons. Central to this line of thinking are usually unstated assumptions about the role nuclear weapons play in the post-cold war security environment. The purpose of this chapter is to examine the premises and logic of the proposals made by NFU proponents and to consider the ways in which a NFU declaration could affect U.S. security interests, particularly in the realm of nuclear nonproliferation.

The chapter is broken down into two main sections. The first addresses general nuclear nonproliferation considerations. Two particular concerns are why nations seek to develop nuclear weapons indigenously and how a NFU declaration could decrease the incentives for these nations to engage in nuclear proliferation. The second section discusses NFU within the context of the NPT Review and Extension Conference to be held in April/May 1995 - in particular, how NFU could help the United States realize its stated goals for NPT renewal and perhaps improve North/South relations.

A. GENERAL NONPROLIFERATION CONSIDERATIONS

1. The Role Of Nuclear Weapons

A critical element in the NFU debate is determining how nuclear weapons should be integrated into U.S. national security policy. Opinions on this issue span the entire spectrum. Some advocate expanding the role of nuclear weapons by creating "usable" warheads to enhance the credibility of U.S. forces for deterring nuclear, or in some cases, even chemical or biological weapon attacks. Others see the role of nuclear weapons as solely to deter a direct nuclear attack on the United

States, more commonly referred to as "central" deterrence.³³ In general, NFU proponents recognize central deterrence as the only legitimate role remaining for nuclear weapons. This section considers three issues which support this argument, including the credibility of U.S. nuclear use policies, the need for extended deterrence, and the danger in expanding the role of nuclear weapons.

In considering why some NFU proponents contend that central deterrence is the only remaining rationale for retaining nuclear weapons, the first issue to address is credibility. Given the global taboo against nuclear use which has evolved over the last fifty years, some argue, it is doubtful that any U.S. president would be willing to authorize nuclear release except as a retaliatory strike in response to a full-scale nuclear attack. Lewis Dunn carries this argument one step further by suggesting that even limited, second nuclear use could help routinize nuclear weapons.³⁴

The second issue to consider is the continued relevance of extended deterrence. There are two arguments to examine. The first is a complete rejection of extended deterrence on the basis that it is no longer necessary.³⁵ This argument assigns to French and British nuclear forces the task of deterring any rejuvenated Russian nuclear threat to Europe. Two underlying tenets of this argument are that it is in the interests of both Britain and France to provide nuclear protection for Germany and that this alternative is acceptable to the Germans.

The second argument acknowledges the need for the United States to continue providing a nuclear umbrella over Western Europe, while rejecting the role of tactical

³³See, for example, Bundy, Crowe, and Drell, 143; and Wolfgang K.H. Panofsky and George Bunn, "The Doctrine of the Nuclear-Weapon States and the Future of Non-Proliferation," Arms Control Today 24 (July/August 1994): 7.

³⁴Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 14. Although this point is not brought out by Dunn, it could be argued that if the credibility of even second nuclear use can in fact be questioned, then the United States could already be perceived as having a *de facto* NFU policy.

³⁵Michael J. Mazarr, "Nuclear Weapons After the Cold War," Washington Quarterly 15 (Summer 1992): 189.

nuclear weapons in achieving this objective. Instead, it is argued, reassurances backed up by capable forward-deployed conventional forces and U.S.-based strategic nuclear forces would still allow the United States to meet its security commitments while eliminating the necessity for the overseas deployment of U.S. nuclear forces.³⁶ Both arguments reject the need for the United States to uphold extended deterrence commitments in the traditional manner, thereby eliminating the need for any nuclear weapons other than those required to support central deterrence.

The third issue supporting the central deterrence argument considers the consequences of assigning new roles for nuclear weapons - for example, using nuclear weapons to deter or respond to the use of chemical or biological weapons. It is argued that, if nuclear weapons were assigned such a role, it would demonstrate to states potentially threatened by chemical or biological weapons that nuclear weapons provide an acceptable response, thereby legitimizing the need to obtain and/or use nuclear weapons.³⁷ According to Wolfgang Panofsky and George Bunn, "including deterrence of chemical and biological weapon activities as a mission for nuclear weapons enhances the perceived leverage of nuclear weapons."³⁸ Thus, assigning a new role for nuclear weapons legitimizes them as a military weapon, which could prompt some countries to acquire them.

Based on this analysis, the only role for nuclear weapons in the post-cold war security environment is central deterrence because it is the only credible role remaining. If necessary, it is argued, strategic nuclear weapons could be used to support existential deterrence and to reassure U.S. allies. Any other threat would be more credibly deterred, and if necessary responded to, with conventional forces.

³⁶Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 15.

³⁷See for example Dunn, "NPT 1995," 19; Warnke, 5; and Panofsky and Bunn, 8-9.

³⁸Panofsky and Bunn, 9.

2. Central Deterrence, No-First-Use And Nuclear Nonproliferation

If central deterrence is indeed the one credible role remaining for nuclear weapons, and it is reasonable to suggest that there is no conceivable instance in which the United States would initiate a strategic nuclear strike, NFU proponents argue, then a NFU pledge could be made without jeopardizing either U.S. interests or its ability to meet security commitments. While it is feasible to make a NFU pledge, do the potential benefits warrant such a declaration?

For many the answer to this question is an unequivocal "yes." The central deterrence rationale allows tactical nuclear weapons to be withdrawn from Europe and replaced by explicit reassurances of a continued U.S. commitment to European security. The exact form these assurances take would depend on the specific ally, but they would likely entail some comprehensive mix of political, diplomatic, economic, and conventional military elements.

NFU proponents contend that a NFU policy declaration, reinforced by the removal of U.S. nuclear forces deployed in Europe, would demonstrate U.S. resolve in diminishing the value of nuclear weapons. This could, NFU proponents add, reduce the incentives for other states to acquire nuclear weapons. It is essential that the NFU declaration be made in conjunction with the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear forces from Europe, NFU proponents suggest; or the declaration may be perceived as an empty gesture.³⁹ Similarly, if the declaration could be made in concert with Russia, Britain, and France and with a reaffirmation by China, it would go a long way toward creating a "global taboo."⁴⁰

The ultimate goal is to foster a global climate in which acquisition and/or use of nuclear weapons is beyond acceptable international behavioral norms. NFU

³⁹Johan Jorgen Holst, "Moving Toward No First Use in Practice," in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, eds. Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1983), 194; see also Les Aspin, "From Deterrence to Denuking," 15-16.

⁴⁰Dunn, "NPT 1995," 19.

proponents suggest that the opportunity to achieve this goal has arrived. The United States, they argue, should adjust its nuclear posture to more accurately reflect the realities of the post-cold war security environment. Their argument holds that by reshaping the U.S. nuclear posture to support central deterrence alone, and recasting national security policy to include a NFU declaration along with the reassurances necessary to uphold U.S. security commitments, the United States can lead the way toward solidifying a global nuclear taboo.

B. NPT REVIEW AND EXTENSION

The NPT Review and Extension Conference will be held from April 17 to May 12, 1995 in New York. The Clinton Administration has stated in the 1994 National Security Strategy that the United States "seeks the indefinite extension of the Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT) beyond 1995 and its universal application."⁴¹ One of the options reportedly being considered for achieving this objective is adopting a NFU policy. This section will briefly address why the NPT Review and Extension Conference is important, why the United States seeks the largest possible consensus to approve the indefinite extension, and how a NFU declaration might help the United States realize this objective.

1. Why the NPT is important

The NPT has three fundamental goals: to prevent wider dissemination of nuclear weapons; to facilitate the peaceful uses of nuclear energy under International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards; and to encourage nuclear arms control and disarmament measures. Precisely how effective the NPT has been is widely debated. Among the issues of particular concern are (1) the apparent but non-declared possession of nuclear weapons by Israel, India and Pakistan; (2) the ability of both Iraq and North Korea to pursue covert nuclear weapons programs while

⁴¹A National Security Strategy of Enlargement and Engagement (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, July 1994), 11.

signatories of the NPT and despite IAEA safeguards; and (3) the limited progress toward achieving nuclear arms control and disarmament measures. Nonetheless, Lewis Dunn points out, the majority of NPT parties acknowledge that "the treaty has helped to head off runaway proliferation and has thereby added to their own security."⁴² George Bunn outlines four reasons why the NPT remains important: (1) it is the only treaty providing for a global norm against adding new nuclear-weapon states; (2) it provides for a global safeguards and inspection regime; (3) it legitimizes international cooperation to prevent unauthorized exports of nuclear material and equipment; (4) it requires nuclear-weapon states to make progress toward nuclear disarmament.⁴³

According to the terms of Article X of the NPT, "Twenty-Five years after the entry in force of the Treaty, a conference shall be convened to decide whether the Treaty shall continue in force indefinitely, or shall be extended for an additional fixed period or periods."⁴⁴ Since only one extension conference was provided for in the original charter, the United States favors an indefinite extension of the NPT. A fixed extension period would equate to the eventual demise of the NPT, while an indefinite extension would - in principle, at least - make the NPT a permanent and integral part of the international security structure. At a recent lecture, George Bunn described a variation of the fixed extension period option which, in his opinion, was most likely to be adopted.⁴⁵ The option calls for successive fixed periods which would continue indefinitely unless there was a negative majority vote at the end of any one such period. This option would be most popular with developing countries seeking to

⁴²Dunn, "NPT 1995," 15.

⁴³George Bunn, "The NPT and Options for its Extension in 1995," The Nonproliferation Review 1 (Winter 1994): 52.

⁴⁴The Nonproliferation Treaty 1994 (Washington, DC: U.S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, 1994), 16.

⁴⁵George Bunn, "NPT Renewal Options," Lecture given at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA on 10 November 1994.

ensure the establishment of a mechanism to pressure the nuclear-weapon states to make progress toward global nuclear disarmament. The review and extension conference will, at any rate, decide the fate of the NPT and set the tone for the future of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime.

The United States has also committed itself to achieving the largest possible consensus in support of an indefinite extension of the NPT. According to Lewis Dunn, divisive debates or deadlock "could undermine the treaty's credibility and its contribution to global stability."⁴⁶ In a report issued by the Congressional Office of Technology Assessment, "the best chance for non-proliferation in the long term lies in building consensus among potential proliferants that it is in their interests to refrain jointly from acquiring the weapons."⁴⁷

2. The NPT and No-First-Use

Given that it is important to have the largest majority possible agree on an indefinite extension of the NPT, how could a U.S. NFU pledge help promote this objective? NFU proponents argue that such a pledge could help in two ways. First, a NFU pledge would provide some of the security assurances non-nuclear-weapon states have sought since the early stages of the NPT negotiations in the 1960s. While no such assurances were incorporated into the NPT, the United States, Britain and the Soviet Union formally adopted UN Security Council Resolution 255 in 1968 which declared that each would seek Security Council action to provide assistance to any non-nuclear-weapon state party to the NPT that was the object of nuclear aggression or threats.⁴⁸ These so-called "positive" security assurances were supplemented in 1978 by "negative" security assurances [see Chapter I]. These assurances were reaffirmed in 1982 by then ACDA director Eugene Rostow.

⁴⁶Dunn, "NPT 1995," 18.

⁴⁷U.S. Congress, Office of Technology Assessment, Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction: Assessing the Risks in Dunn, "The NPT," 55.

⁴⁸The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty 1994, 6.

Many non-nuclear-weapon states view these assurances as inadequate. Both Lewis Dunn and George Bunn point out that additional security assurances by the nuclear-weapon states are seen as an important *quid pro quo* by non-nuclear-weapon states.⁴⁹ In return for agreeing not to acquire nuclear weapons, non-nuclear-weapon states ask nuclear-weapon states to agree not to attack or threaten them with nuclear weapons and to come to their aid if someone else does.⁵⁰ To date, the positive assurances have still been endorsed by only the United States, Britain and Russia and, being subject to Security Council veto, are considered ineffective except possibly against some rogue nuclear power. The negative assurances issued unilaterally by each of the five nuclear-weapon states are not legally binding and contain variations which may reduce their effectiveness in some circumstances.

According to George Bunn, "security assurances may be expected to be one of the most important issues at the 1995 NPT review and extension conference."⁵¹ A U.S. NFU pledge would go one step beyond negative assurances by virtue of its universal applicability. If made in conjunction with a reaffirmation of the positive assurances, NFU proponents argue, a NFU pledge could make a significant contribution to the stability of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. With credible security guarantees, NFU champions maintain, the incentives for non-nuclear-weapon states to adhere to the NPT would be increased. This stability would be further enhanced, it is argued, because these assurances would increase the number of states inclined to agree to an indefinite extension of the NPT. It should be noted (NFU proponents add) that a NFU declaration made as part of a binding UN Security Council resolution, or even as a separate treaty, would have much greater credibility than a unilateral U.S. NFU declaration. However, the significance of the U.S.

⁴⁹See Dunn, "NPT 1995," 16 and Bunn, "The NPT," 57.

⁵⁰Bunn and Timerbaev, 11.

⁵¹Bunn, "The NPT," 14.

leading the way unilaterally, or by following the lead of China, which already has a NFU policy, should not be minimized.

The second way in which a NFU pledge might help the United States achieve a large consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT is by reducing the perceived discrimination written into the NPT. The issue of "haves" vs. "have-nots" has the potential for being the most formidable obstacle to achieving an indefinite extension of the NPT. It is also an issue which is understood by both sides to give the "have-nots" considerable leverage at the review and extension conference. According to two analysts, "the opportunity for major discord could be high unless the nuclear-weapon states take measures to reduce the force of such criticism (that the NPT is discriminatory)."⁵² While probably not sufficient in itself, a NFU pledge might be one means for diminishing the distinction between the two sides. It is one step toward persuading the "have-nots" that their security would be enhanced if they renounced the acquisition of nuclear weapons.⁵³ Despite its shortcomings, the NPT is the only widely accepted means for stemming nuclear proliferation. As such, it is in the interests of the United States to secure the NPT's indefinite extension at the 1995 review and extension conference. With the concurrence of the largest possible majority of participating states, the credibility of the NPT would be enhanced; and this would, in turn, strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation regime.⁵⁴ A NFU pledge, declared unilaterally or encompassed in a UN Security Council resolution or separate treaty, might promote an indefinite extension by a large majority by satisfying (at least in part) requests by non-nuclear-weapon states for security guarantees and more equitable treatment as incentives for adhering to the NPT.

⁵²Simpson and Howlett, 68.

⁵³Panofsky and Bunn, 9.

⁵⁴George Bunn, "NPT Renewal Options," Lecture given at the Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA on 10 November 1994. George Bunn acknowledged that it would be better to obtain a larger consensus, but that this could mean that the United States would have to settle for the successive fixed period NPT extension option.

3. North/South Relations

Underlying the perceived discrimination incorporated into the NPT is the much broader "North vs. South" issue. The NPT is viewed by many developing nations as one contributing element to the widening gap between the "haves" and "have-nots." A NFU declaration could serve - NFU proponents contend - to draw the north and south closer in terms of their respective perceptions of the utility of nuclear weapons. By itself, a NFU pledge might not resolve these longstanding differences; but it could serve as an impetus toward establishing a closer association.

How could a NFU pledge help to promote better north/south relations? Simply put, a NFU declaration would allow the United States to demonstrate its commitment to a more equitable NPT. If the NPT is perceived to be less discriminating while the nuclear-weapon states address the security concerns of non-nuclear-weapon states more seriously, then the United States may be more likely to see a large majority voting for an indefinite extension. As a supplemental benefit, the United States might gain political capital among developing nations. This could be important in providing a more favorable political context for future regional operations in which it would be advantageous to build a coalition.

C. SUMMARY

It is argued by an increasing number of analysts that there remains only one credible role for nuclear weapons: central deterrence. Some build on this argument to contend that it is time for the United States to take the lead in reinforcing a global norm against nuclear proliferation. To accomplish this, it is argued, the United States should issue a NFU declaration, accompanied by a withdrawal of the remaining U.S. nuclear forces deployed overseas. NFU champions maintain that a NFU declaration could also help to secure a large consensus for indefinite extension of the NPT at the review and extension conference by giving non-nuclear-weapon states the security assurances they seek while diminishing the discriminatory nature of the NPT. A stronger, revitalized NPT would serve to strengthen the nuclear nonproliferation

regime. A secondary benefit for the United States could be a significant gain in political capital among developing nations.

III. IMPLICATIONS FOR DETERRENCE

A. DETERRENCE

Deterrence has been the cornerstone of U.S. nuclear strategy for over forty years. While U.S. concepts of deterrence have changed as U.S. nuclear strategy has evolved, the ultimate goal of deterrence has remained constant. According to Leon Sigal, "the aim of deterrence is to convince a potential adversary that the cost of obtaining his political objectives by military means would be prohibitively high."⁵⁵

This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first examines the issues surrounding the role of deterrence in today's security environment. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to determine the role deterrence should play in the post-cold war environment. However, it is relevant to review the issues that could be affected by a NFU policy. The second section examines the potential implications for deterrence of a U.S. NFU policy.

1. U.S. Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence (1945 - 1990)

To provide a clearer perspective on deterrence in today's security environment, it is useful to summarize how deterrence has evolved in relation to U.S. nuclear strategy.⁵⁶ There are three dominant factors to keep in mind when

⁵⁵Leon V. Sigal, "No First Use and NATO's Nuclear Posture," in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, eds. Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institute, 1983), 106.

⁵⁶Information for this section is based largely on Robert S. McNamara, "The Military Role of Nuclear Weapons: Perceptions and Misperceptions," Foreign Affairs 62 (Fall 1983): 59-80; Leon Sloss and Marc Dean Millot, "U.S. Nuclear Strategy in Evolution," in Dimensions of Military Strategy, George Edward Thibault, ed. (Washington, DC: National Defense University, 1987), 65-79; Aaron L. Friedberg, "The Evolution of U.S. Strategic 'Doctrine'-1945-1981," in Samuel P. Huntington, ed. The Strategic Imperative, New Policies for American Security (Cambridge, MA: Ballinger, 1982), 53-99; and Henry S. Rowen, "The Evolution of Strategic Nuclear Doctrine," in Lawrence Martin, ed. Strategic Thought in the Nuclear Age (Heinemann: London, 1979), 131-156.

considering the evolution of U.S. nuclear strategy. These are the changing nuclear balance, innovation in technology, and an improved understanding of Soviet nuclear doctrine.⁵⁷

The basic concept underlying U.S. nuclear strategy between the end of World War II and the early 1960s was what Air Force General Curtis LeMay described in 1948 as "a single massive attack." Target lists, which were confined primarily to cities immediately following World War II, were expanded throughout the 1950s to include a full range of Soviet military, industrial, as well as urban targets - all of which could have been attacked simultaneously in a single crushing blow. The strategy was driven largely by technological, economic, and doctrinal considerations (in particular, the Strategic Air Command component of the Air Force). According to Aaron Friedberg,

It was assumed that a massive, multilayered, atomic air attack would prevent the Soviets from using their own steadily growing nuclear capability, slow or stop the Red Army's advance into Europe, destroy the Russian economy, and drain the Soviet state of its willingness to wage war.⁵⁸

Thus, so long as the U.S. maintained nuclear superiority over the Soviet Union, the threat of a massive nuclear response was a credible deterrent.

The election of John Kennedy in 1960 marked an important turning point for U.S. nuclear strategy. Many of the men brought into the Department of Defense by McNamara were former employees of the RAND Corporation and had come to believe that a strategy premised on the early, massive use of nuclear weapons was suicidal.⁵⁹ By 1962, it became apparent that U.S. nuclear strategy was shifting from a strategy of "massive retaliation" to one of "flexible response." Henry Rowen points to two reasons for this shift: (1) the desire to develop more credible means to respond to the kinds of contingencies which were anticipated; and (2) having an alternative

⁵⁷Sloss and Millot, 75-76.

⁵⁸Friedberg, 67.

⁵⁹Ibid., 67-68.

between suicide and surrender should deterrence fail.⁶⁰ As described by then Secretary of Defense McNamara, "Instead of the early massive use of nuclear weapons, it permitted a substantial raising of the nuclear threshold by planning for the critical initial responses to Soviet aggression to be made by conventional forces alone."⁶¹ The new strategy called for a substantial buildup in conventional forces in Europe to reduce reliance on nuclear weapons. By maintaining the capability to respond to Soviet aggression on several levels and by threatening to escalate the response level as required, it was believed that deterrence stability could be reestablished.⁶²

Critics of the flexible response strategy have pointed to three fundamental weaknesses. First, while the Soviet Union would in fact be deterred from a strategic nuclear confrontation with the United States, the same could not necessarily be said for a more limited confrontation confined to Central Europe. Of particular concern was the perceived overwhelming superiority of Soviet conventional forces and the fear that flexible response would weaken the ability to deter a Soviet decision to initiate conventional war.⁶³

Second, McNamara points out that a key element of flexible response was the need to build up conventional forces. This was an objective that was never met. The result is that the nuclear threshold was never really raised and therefore nuclear forces remained necessary to deter a Russian conventional attack.

Finally, as the Soviet Union expanded and improved the capabilities of its strategic and tactical nuclear arsenals, the credibility of the U.S. nuclear deterrent was again weakened. By the mid 1970's, the Soviet strategic arsenal was capable of

⁶⁰Rowen, 143.

⁶¹Ibid., 63.

⁶²For a concise overview of the relationship between deterrence and stability see Sigal, 106-109.

⁶³Richard K. Betts, "Compound Deterrence vs. No-First-Use: What's Wrong is What's Right," Orbis 28 (Winter 1985): 699.

surviving a U.S. strategic first strike and inflicting unacceptable levels of destruction in retaliation.⁶⁴ In this context, some argued, the only realistic role remaining for U.S. strategic forces was to deter the Soviet Union's first use of its strategic arsenal.

In summary, with the loss of U.S. superiority in strategic forces, deterrence increasingly came to be associated with the element of Soviet uncertainty regarding the nature and scope of a U.S. response to aggression rather than the certainty of that response which was implicit in Assured Destruction.⁶⁵ In other words, while the nature of the deterrent changed, the ultimate goal, deterrence, remained unchanged.

2. U.S Nuclear Strategy and Deterrence (1990 - 1994)

U.S. nuclear strategy since the end of the cold war has remained uncertain. This is due in part to America's increasing preoccupation with domestic issues. It is also due to a widespread and increasingly vocal effort to delegitimize nuclear weapons and nuclear deterrence.⁶⁶ U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe have been reduced to ten percent of the peak deployment levels of the 1970's. These consist solely of nuclear gravity bombs designed for delivery from U.S. and allied dual-capable aircraft.⁶⁷

The London Declaration of July 1990 transformed NATO's nuclear strategy. President Bush highlighted several key elements of the London Declaration at a press conference following the summit. These included the fundamental and continuing importance of nuclear deterrence as well as the reduced reliance on nuclear weapons.

⁶⁴McNamara, 67.

⁶⁵Sloss and Millot, 78.

⁶⁶For background, see David S. Yost, "The Delegitimization of Nuclear Deterrence?," Armed Forces and Society 16 (Summer 1990): 487-508, and Edward N. Luttwak, "An Emerging Postnuclear Era?" The Washington Quarterly 11 (Winter 1988): 5-15.

⁶⁷David S. Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons (Livermore, CA: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, July 2, 1993): 2.

This reduced reliance was explicitly underscored by the reference to nuclear forces as weapons of "last resort."

In November 1991, NATO Heads of State and Government released their new strategic concept. Two points relating to U.S. nuclear strategy are worth noting. First, a continuing role for U.S. nuclear forces was explicitly reaffirmed. Specifically, "(U.S.) nuclear forces based in Europe and committed to NATO provide an essential political and military link between the European and the North American members of the Alliance."⁶⁸ Second, the phrase "last resort" was excluded from any reference to the role of nuclear weapons.⁶⁹

Since the end of the cold war there has been extensive public debate surrounding U.S. nuclear strategy and the role of deterrence. A "comprehensive" Nuclear Posture Review (NPR) was ordered by President Clinton, the results of which were released in September 1994. According to Secretary of Defense Perry, "The results of the NPR strike an appropriate balance between showing U.S. leadership in responding to the changed international environment and hedging against an uncertain future."⁷⁰ General Shalikashvili, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS), emphasized that the Nuclear Posture Review explicitly sought to reassure U.S. allies. "Our commitments to our allies are neither changed nor in any way diminished by this review. The United States will retain all of the capabilities we need to sustain our commitments overseas."⁷¹ This statement reinforces the review's

⁶⁸The Alliance's New Strategic Concept, Press Communique S-1(91)85 (November 7, 1991): 15 (para. 56).

⁶⁹For a more detailed account of this deliberate and intentional exclusion, see Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 5-6.

⁷⁰William J. Perry, "DOD Review Recommends Reduction In Nuclear Force," Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) News Release, (Washington, DC, 22 September 1994): 3.

⁷¹General Shalikashvili, News Release of opening comments at press conference, Office of Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), (Washington, DC, 22 September 1994): 3.

recommendations to retain dual-capable aircraft and the deployment of U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe. While some U.S. officials are reportedly disappointed by President Clinton's decision to endorse the nuclear "status quo," JCS members and other senior military officials are reportedly satisfied that the current nuclear posture will satisfy deterrence requirements while providing a hedge against "the uncertainties of reform in Russia and the slow pace of nuclear weapons reductions."⁷²

3. Deterrence Dilemmas

Until the collapse of the Soviet Union, some analysts argue, U.S. nuclear deterrence was based upon three fundamental beliefs: the ultimate rationality of the Soviet leadership; the ability of that leadership to exercise absolute control over its nuclear weapons; and the risk that any nuclear exchange might result in the "mutual assured destruction" of both nations.⁷³ U.S. efforts to maintain a stable deterrent have since been complicated by the end of the cold war, which has precipitated an entirely new range of threats. In today's diffuse and uncertain security environment, questions arise as to who the United States should be deterring from what behavior or action, and how. (The more fundamental question of the future roles of deterrence in a multi-polar world is not considered in this analysis.) These questions can best be addressed by examining the associated arguments in the context of the three levels of deterrence: strategic, regional and conventional.⁷⁴

⁷²R. Jeffrey Smith, 1.

⁷³John R. Powers and Joseph E. Muckerman, "Rethink the Nuclear Threat," Orbis 38 (Winter 1994): 99.

⁷⁴Sigal, 107.

a. Strategic Deterrence

The strategic threat from Russia has diminished but has not disappeared. Moscow's intentions have changed more than its capabilities.⁷⁵ Fear of some form of national upheaval in Russia has sparked concern over "loose nukes", nuclear proliferation, and accidental or unauthorized launch. In his January 1994 report to the President and Congress, then Secretary of Defense Les Aspin identified one of the four most serious dangers to U.S. security as a reversal of reforms in Russia.⁷⁶ In presenting the findings of the Nuclear Posture Review, Deputy Secretary of Defense John Deutch noted that economic and political realities have made it highly unlikely that the Russians could return to cold war conventional force levels any time in the foreseeable future. Deputy Secretary Deutch added:

It is a less expensive and less demanding matter for them to return to a much more aggressive nuclear posture. If something does go wrong in Russia, it is likely that it is in the nuclear forces area that we will face the first challenge.⁷⁷

It is widely accepted that at the strategic level, nuclear weapons are the only credible deterrent against nuclear attacks on U.S. territory. Even those advocating a conventionally dominant deterrent acknowledge that "direct retaliation is one of the few credible missions for strategic nuclear forces in the post-cold war world."⁷⁸

There is a general consensus that the maintenance of a strategic deterrent will be necessary for the foreseeable future. It provides a hedge against the

⁷⁵Sherard Cowper-Coles, "From Defence to Security: British Policy in Transition," *Survival* 36 (Spring 1994): 144.

⁷⁶"Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and to the Congress," (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 1994): 3.

⁷⁷John Deutch, News Release of press conference, Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs), (Washington, DC, 22 September 1994), 7.

⁷⁸Gary L. Guertner, "Deterrence and Conventional Military Forces," *The Washington Quarterly* 16 (Winter 1993): 149. See also James J. Wirtz, "Strategic Conventional Deterrence: Lessons from the Maritime Strategy," *Security Studies* 3 (Autumn 1993).

risk of a newly belligerent Russia as well as against some as yet unknown nuclear threat. Finally, a strategic arsenal must be maintained for the deterrent to be credible at the strategic level.

b. Regional Deterrence

Two of the four dangers to U.S. security interests identified by Secretary of Defense Perry were those posed by nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction as well as those posed by regional aggressors. U.S. military strategy and the supporting force structure are based on the ability to win two nearly simultaneous major regional conflicts (MRCs).⁷⁹ This regional, vice Eurocentric, focus has raised important questions for deterrence.

The objective of regional nuclear deterrence is to preclude a nation or sub-national group from directing a nuclear attack against U.S. territory, forces, or allies. The first question to address is whether this objective is attainable with nuclear weapons.

Some argue that the role of nuclear weapons in the post-cold war security environment is limited to the strategic level of deterrence. Les Aspin, while serving as Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, stated that "deterrence requires adversaries be identified and that they behave rationally. The absence of either one of these two factors, however, could remove the fear of retaliation on which deterrence depends."⁸⁰ Other arguments emphasize the capabilities of advanced conventional munitions;⁸¹ the absence of any immediate threat to deter, which allows reassurance to suffice;⁸² and the weakened credibility of a U.S. nuclear

⁷⁹"Report of the Secretary of Defense to the President and the Congress," (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, January, 1994): 3-5.

⁸⁰Aspin, "From Deterrence to Denuking," 7.

⁸¹Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 14.

⁸²Ivo H. Daalder, "Nuclear Weapons in Europe: Why Zero is Better," Arms Control Today 23 (January/February 1993): 17.

retaliatory strike.⁸³ Several of the authors arguing against the utility of a regional nuclear deterrent emphasize that a necessary prerequisite is a global environment in which a nation initiating the use of nuclear weapons would be politically and economically isolated. "In effect, future U.S. efforts to deter use of nuclear weapons by hostile new nuclear powers cannot be separated from broader international efforts to stigmatize use of nuclear weaponry as outside the realm of acceptable international behavior."⁸⁴

Various theories for providing a credible regional nuclear deterrent have been advanced by those who contend that the need for such a capability exists. For example, John Powers and Joseph Muckerman have called for the United States to acquire a wide variety of usable nuclear and conventional weapons to allow for a response tailored appropriately for the threat. This said, the threat of "massive response," while not necessarily a realistic option, is retained to enhance deterrence by fostering uncertainty. The development of a limited ballistic missile defense system as well as a consistent U.S. nuclear policy would also have significant deterrent value and would demonstrate the credibility of U.S. resolve.⁸⁵

In contrast, Frederick Strain has argued that the U.S. nuclear arsenal is ill-suited to deal with the new range of threats. The collateral, particularly environmental, damage that would be caused by the current nuclear inventory of the United States would render it unusable. Instead, the so-called "tinynukes" and the neutron bomb are advanced as solutions to the problem of "usable nukes." According to one analyst, these weapons provide "a credible military capability that could serve to deter nuclear attacks against deployed forces."⁸⁶

⁸³See for example Seth Cropsey, "The Only Credible Deterrent," Foreign Affairs 73 (March/April 1994): 15; and Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 14-15.

⁸⁴Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 14.

⁸⁵Powers and Muckerman, 104-105.

⁸⁶Frederick R. Strain, "Nuclear Proliferation and Deterrence: A Policy Conundrum," Parameters 23 (Autumn 1993): 88.

Once nuclear weapons are acknowledged to serve a useful political-military purpose, they become legitimized. The increased potential for nuclear proliferation is politically unacceptable, however.

Mutual deterrence between the United States and Russia has probably helped to produce a fairly high degree of stability at the strategic level. According to Leon Sigal, however, "Nuclear stability at the strategic level does not necessarily assure nuclear stability in Europe."⁸⁷ In other words, the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence commitments is based, at least in part, on the presence of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe. As suggested by one author, based on the historical experience of NATO, "Shared security interests can be most reliably defended through nuclear force deployments and associated arrangements that provide for effective risk-and responsibility-sharing."⁸⁸ As Secretary of Defense Cheney suggested in 1991 (see Chapter IV), doubts about the credibility of U.S. extended deterrence commitments could lead nations such as Germany and Japan to seek their own independent nuclear forces.

c. Conventional Deterrence

The final level of deterrence to address is conventional. Coincident with the increasing delegitimization of nuclear weapons, and following the proven technological superiority of U.S. conventional weapons during the Persian Gulf War, considerable attention has been focused on the feasibility of deterring a regional nuclear aggressor with advanced conventional munitions.⁸⁹ The same argument advanced by advocates of "tinynukes" (that is, the inadequacy of the U.S. nuclear

⁸⁷Sigal, 107.

⁸⁸See Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 18-21 for speculation about the potential implications for extended deterrence of a withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from German territory.

⁸⁹See for example Cropsey; Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 14-15; and Guertner.

arsenal to deal with the new range of threats) is also used by those in favor of conventional deterrence. In general, conventional deterrence advocates focus on the credibility of conventional over nuclear weapons for deterring a regional aggressor. According to one analyst, "conventional deterrence that combines attempts to dissuade, capabilities to neutralize or capture, credible threats to retaliate, and the ability to defend is more credible against regional powers than nuclear threats."⁹⁰

Counter-arguments to a purely conventional deterrent acknowledge that, while a deterrent role for conventional forces exists, nuclear weapons provide the best hedge against uncertainty by significantly raising the risks. Accordingly, "the only policy choice that hedges sub-optimally against all contingencies is one that combines enhanced denial capabilities and continued threats of nuclear punishment should denial fail."⁹¹ Other arguments against purely conventional deterrence point to lessons from the Persian Gulf War. Now that the world has witnessed the capabilities and tactics of U.S. conventional forces, countermeasures can be developed which could diminish the effectiveness of conventional deterrence. When factors such as time, the large number of forces required, and the prohibitive costs of conventional weapons are taken into account, the question of credibility once again surfaces. It is doubtful that there would be sufficient domestic consensus in the United States to undertake an operation of the magnitude of Desert Storm unilaterally unless U.S. territory or citizens or other significant interests were directly at risk.

In general, the difficulty in arguing in favor of the credibility of conventional deterrence is that the U.S. nuclear arsenal must always be given some degree of consideration by a potential aggressor. Therefore, since World War II, it has been impossible to accurately distinguish between the contributions of nuclear and conventional deterrence. The most recent example of this difficulty can be found in the Persian Gulf War. Although the conflict was resolved at the conventional level,

⁹⁰Guertner. 147.

⁹¹Richard K. Betts. "Conventional Deterrence: Predictive Uncertainty and Policy Confidence." World Politics 37 (January 1985): 179.

just prior to the commencement of the ground war Vice President Dan Quayle stated that should Saddam Hussein decide to use chemical weapons, no response option could be ruled out.⁹² Similarly, in a 1992 British television interview, U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger stated that "Saddam Hussein was in no doubt that had he used such (chemical) weapons, he would have regretted it, and regretted it, and regretted it."⁹³ The Israeli response to the SCUD missile attacks must also be factored in. Reportedly, the Israelis went to full-scale nuclear alert, arming mobile missile launchers with nuclear weapons and deploying them so that they could have been launched toward Iraq.⁹⁴ Some claim that it was this nuclear threat that deterred Iraqi forces from invading Saudi Arabia during Desert Shield and kept them from using either chemical or biological weapons. Short of interviewing Saddam Hussein and his military commanders, there is no way of knowing exactly what deterred Iraqi forces.

The issue of chemical and biological weapons is considered in this section since the conventional level is where the United States would logically prefer to deter their use. A nuclear response is not credible because of the Pandora's Box it would open. Specifically, it would signal a new role for nuclear weapons which, given the relatively extensive proliferation of chemical and biological weapons, could legitimize nuclear use to counter them and thereby increase the risk of nuclear proliferation.⁹⁵

⁹²Reuters, "Quayle calls Nuclear Arms 'Option' Against Chemicals," International Herald Tribune, 2-3 February 1991, 3.

⁹³Lawrence Eagleburger, quoted in David Miller, "Nuclear Warfare and Regional Nuclear Powers," International Defense Review 25 (September 1992): 824.

⁹⁴Seymour M. Hersh, The Sampson Option, (New York: Vintage Books, 1993): 318; also Lewis A. Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 8-9.

⁹⁵See Wolfgang K.H. Panofsky and George Bunn, "The Doctrine of the Nuclear-Weapon States And the Future of Non-Proliferation," Arms Control Today 24 (July/August 1994): 8-9; and Paul C. Warnke, "Strategic Nuclear Policy and Non-Proliferation," Arms Control Today, 24 (May 1994): 5.

When seeking to deter the use of chemical and biological weapons with either nuclear or conventional forces many of the same problems are encountered. Some of the common challenges to overcome include identifying weapons of mass destruction programs, collecting sufficient intelligence, and developing technologies that lead to "usable" weapons. One of the most significant military challenges is how to counter extensive underground facilities, such as those known to exist in North Korea. As technologies are developed to help overcome these challenges, it is the conventional weapons that will provide a much more credible deterrent.

Deterrence can be broken down into three levels: strategic, regional and conventional. Within those three levels, a broad range of theories has emerged to attempt to define the role of deterrence in the post-cold war security environment. Some suggest that a purely conventional deterrent would allow the United States to meet its security requirements. Others contend that, to varying degrees, there are critical deterrence requirements that only nuclear weapons can fulfill. The two most contentious and widely debated levels of deterrence are regional and conventional. Of particular concern for this thesis is how a U.S. NFU declaration would affect the ability of the United States to meet its deterrence requirements at each level.

B. NO-FIRST-USE: IMPLICATIONS FOR DETERRENCE

As was discussed in the first chapter, the issue of whether the United States should adopt a NFU policy has once again emerged in the public debate. It is important to understand the potential ramifications of adopting such a policy. As one of the cornerstones of U.S. nuclear strategy, deterrence is a particularly vital element to consider. This section will address the central thesis of this chapter: the implications of a U.S. NFU declaration on deterrence. Each level of deterrence-strategic, regional and conventional-will be addressed within the context of a NFU policy.

1. No-First-Use and Strategic Deterrence

The maintenance of a modern, fully capable and reliable strategic deterrent has been the top **defense** priority of the United States for over forty years and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.⁹⁶ The defensive aspect of strategic deterrence is emphasized to affirm that the U.S. does not view nuclear war as a viable means of attaining national security goals. In current and immediately foreseeable circumstances, there are no imaginable scenarios in which even a limited strategic nuclear first strike would serve U.S. interests or be acceptable to the American public. Therefore, a NFU declaration would have no immediate effect on the ability of the United States to maintain stability at the strategic level of "central" deterrence - that is, deterring nuclear attack against the United States itself. (The longer-term contingencies present a wide range of scenario-dependent analytical problems that are beyond the scope of this thesis.)

2. No-First-Use and Regional Deterrence

The argument that dominated the NFU debate of the early 1980s was centered around the perceived overwhelming conventional superiority of Soviet forces.⁹⁷ The NATO strategy of flexible response included the threat of first-use of nuclear weapons to deter a Soviet conventional attack. The credibility of this deterrent posture resided in the numerous uncertainties it presented for the Soviet Union. These included the strength of NATO's conventional defenses, the possibility of a NATO first-use of nuclear weapons, and the possibility that the United States, France, or Britain would, independent of the others, make the decision to introduce nuclear weapons. A NFU declaration would have reduced this uncertainty down to one: whether NATO's

⁹⁶Colin L. Powell, National Military Strategy of the United States (January 1992): 6.

⁹⁷See for example Kaiser, Leber, Mertes, and Schultz; and General Bernard W. Rogers. "The Atlantic Alliance: Prescriptions for a Difficult Decade," Foreign Affairs 60 (Summer 1982): 1153-1155; and Iklé, 19-23.

conventional defense would fail.⁹⁸ One additional uncertainty for the Soviet Union was whether a NFU policy would actually hold if the Alliance was confronted with possible defeat. The counter-argument focused on increasing NATO's conventional forces in Europe to raise the threshold of uncertainty.

A second key argument focused on Alliance unity. Opponents of a NFU policy argued it "would destroy the confidence of Europeans and especially Germans in the European-American Alliance as a community of risk, and would endanger the strategic unity of the Alliance and the security of Western Europe."⁹⁹ Counter-arguments suggested that Alliance unity could be enhanced by the reduced reliance on nuclear weapons. Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith suggested that the U.S. could assume an "appropriate share" of the conventional build-up to dispel concerns over the U.S. disengaging from Europe.¹⁰⁰

This brief introduction to the two key arguments in the 1980s NFU debate is important because these arguments are still being debated today. Whether these arguments are still valid depends on one's perception of how European security requirements have evolved since the end of the cold war, and where this is likely to lead in the future.

It is useful to consider separately the potential effects of NFU on the military and political role of nuclear weapons within the context of regional deterrence. A NFU declaration, by definition, would indicate that the United States is prepared to defend its shared security interests with conventional forces alone, provided that nuclear weapons use is not initiated by the aggressor. Given the vast U.S. conventional superiority in current circumstances, it is probable that for the foreseeable future the United States could successfully defend those shared security interests on a purely conventional level.

⁹⁸Betts, "Compound Deterrence...", 707-708.

⁹⁹Kaiser, Leber, Mertes and Schulz, 1162.

¹⁰⁰Bundy, Kennan, McNamara and Smith, 761.

This raises the question of what military purpose is served by U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe, given that there is no longer a clear nuclear threat to deter in Europe. The answer, from a prudent political-military point of view, lies in the uncertainty associated with the continuing progress of political and economic reforms in Russia. According to Yost, "The emergence of a expansionist Russia under dictatorial rule could rapidly increase the potential value of Western nuclear weapons capabilities for national and allied security."¹⁰¹ This view has been reinforced by Defense Secretary Perry's remarks concerning the recently completed nuclear posture review. Perry asserted that it was necessary to maintain essential elements of the current nuclear posture as a hedge against a reversal of reforms in Russia.¹⁰² Militarily, therefore, U.S. nuclear forces in Europe act as a precaution against a resurgent Russian threat. A U.S. NFU declaration could weaken the credibility of this hedging strategy.

It is useful to examine, from the European perspective, the effect of a U.S. NFU declaration on the security role of nuclear weapons. In a speech given at King's College in November 1993, Britain's defense secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, expressed "deep skepticism" over the value of a NFU declaration. Rifkind stated that a NFU declaration would imply that conventional war was a "safe option."¹⁰³ This is no longer an immediate concern now that Russia has lost the level of conventional superiority maintained by the USSR, and will have neither the economic means nor the political will to regain that superiority in the foreseeable future. It is nonetheless an important long-term consideration for any prudent government in Western Europe.

European experts are also concerned that a U.S. NFU declaration could lead to the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear weapons from Europe. The burden of extended deterrence would be shifted to NATO's strategic nuclear and conventional forces.

¹⁰¹Yost. "Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons," 5.

¹⁰²Perry. "DOD Review Recommends Reduction in Nuclear Force," 3.

¹⁰³Rifkind speech at King's College, London, 5.

This brings out what one analyst refers to as NATO's nuclear predicament: "What may be sufficient to deter an adversary may not be sufficient to reassure an ally."¹⁰⁴

The political ramifications bring into focus the real issues in the post-cold war NFU debate. U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe are generally perceived by the NATO European allies to be one of the vital links binding North America to Europe. Conversely, the U.S. perceives this "risk-sharing" as proof of a continued European interest in U.S. nuclear commitments.¹⁰⁵ Alliance cohesion is a key element in the credibility of NATO's deterrent. The belief in "strength through unity" is predominant.

Many West European experts in strategic affairs contend that a U.S. NFU declaration would undermine alliance cohesion and therefore raise doubts about the credibility of NATO's deterrent.¹⁰⁶ In the short-run this argument is likely to be true. However, it is useful to project this scenario into the future to examine potential long-term ramifications.

One possibility is that as a result of a U.S. NFU declaration, U.S. nuclear systems are removed, either voluntarily or by request, from Europe. In return, some observers have suggested, the United States could issue reconstitution guarantees and rely on existential deterrence to affirm the continued credibility of U.S. nuclear commitments.¹⁰⁷

A second possibility is that a U.S. NFU declaration could be perceived as a conscious effort by the United States to disengage from Europe. This could lead to

¹⁰⁴Daalder, 17.

¹⁰⁵Thomas Enders, Holger H. Mey, and Michael Ruhle, "The New Germany and Nuclear Weapons," in Nuclear Weapons in the Changing World: Perspectives From Europe, Asia, and North America Patrick J. Garrity and Steven A. Maaranen, eds. (New York: Plenum Press, 1992): 132-136.

¹⁰⁶Josef Joffe, "Europe's American Pacifier," Foreign Policy 54 (Spring 1984): 72-74.

¹⁰⁷Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 18.

efforts by Britain and France to compensate by forming a common European nuclear doctrine and/or to efforts by Germany to develop nuclear weapons to guarantee its own security.¹⁰⁸

These possibilities might reflect steps in the evolutionary process of greater European integration. The idea of a European nuclear doctrine was introduced by President Mitterrand of France in January 1992 and the general principle of dialogue has since been endorsed by Britain. While this is acknowledged as being a long-term project, some progress is being made. This can be viewed as a hedging strategy against the possibility of a diminished U.S. commitment to European defense.¹⁰⁹ Whether Germany would accept a European nuclear umbrella is a separate issue.

Within the context of this long-term vision of Europe, what are the implications of a U.S. NFU declaration on deterrence? A U.S. NFU policy would probably undermine alliance cohesion, which would weaken deterrence. As states perceive that their security requirements are no longer being met, a fundamental restructuring of Europe could result. The resulting instability could be detrimental to U.S. security interests. This prospect is discussed in more detail in Chapter IV.

Within the context of the regional level of deterrence, U.S. nuclear threats are likely to be largely ineffective against some new nuclear-weapon states or regional aggressors. Nonetheless, the presence of U.S. nuclear forces in Europe along with the capability of deploying nuclear cruise missiles on submarines and surface ships may provide a certain level of stability by providing a hedge against a resurgent Russia, strengthening regional deterrence, and reassuring allies.

3. No-First-Use and Conventional Deterrence

The Persian Gulf War illustrated the overwhelming capability and superiority of U.S. conventional forces. This stature provides for a certain degree of credible

¹⁰⁸*Ibid.*, 21-22.

¹⁰⁹Nicholas K.J. Witney, "British Nuclear Policy After the Cold War," *Survival* 36 (Winter 1994-95): 105-107.

deterrence against conventional and (perhaps to some extent) nuclear attacks. A U.S. NFU declaration would neither detract from nor enhance this conventional credibility. This may not hold true when the challenge is deterring the use of chemical or biological weapons. U.S. policy-makers have continued to leave the nature of a U.S. response to the use of chemical and biological weapons ambiguous. A NFU declaration could remove some of the ambiguity, thereby diminishing the ability to credibly deter the use of chemical and biological weapons.

C. SUMMARY

This chapter has sought to determine the implications for deterrence of a U.S. NFU declaration. By definition a NFU declaration would have the most significant impact at the regional level of deterrence. At this level, the military and political ramifications can be assessed to determine, from a deterrence perspective, whether a U.S. NFU pledge would be sensible.

Militarily, the effect of a NFU declaration would be negligible in today's immediately foreseeable security environment. The primary role of forward-deployed U.S. nuclear forces has shifted from deterrence to reassurance of U.S. allies. Likewise, the level of uncertainty over whether the United States would introduce nuclear weapons in response to any weapons of mass destruction attack short of a strategic nuclear strike against U.S. territory has been greatly diminished. This negates the premise upon which the strength of contemporary deterrence is based: uncertainty. Is the United States limiting its response options to such an extent that the reemergence of a "Soviet-style" threat would leave the United States unable to defend its vital interests? Obviously, so long as nuclear weapons exist, the possibility of their use will remain.¹¹⁰ If vital interests were at stake, the United States would defend them. A better question to address is how, politically, a U.S. NFU pledge would affect the ability of the United States to continue to reassure its allies.

¹¹⁰Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith, 766.

Politically, a NFU pledge by the United States would be unacceptable in today's uncertain security environment. It would undermine the credibility of U.S. security assurances and be detrimental to alliance cohesion. The nations of Western Europe have not progressed far enough in the integration of their security policies to compensate for a U.S. withdrawal. The result might be a destabilized Europe with France, Britain, Germany and others each seeking primacy.¹¹¹

A NFU declaration by the United States would undermine deterrence by appearing to decouple U.S. interests from Europe. The resulting break in alliance cohesion could jeopardize the vital interests of the United States. The following chapter addresses the implications of NFU for alliance security in greater detail.

¹¹¹Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 22.

IV. ALLIANCE COHESION CONSIDERATIONS

Britain is used as a case study to evaluate the main argument of this thesis. This allows for an assessment of the broader implications of a U.S. NFU declaration for alliance cohesion, extended deterrence, and nuclear nonproliferation. The two main sections of this chapter examine key elements of Britain's nuclear strategy, and analyze the implications for Britain if the United States were to adopt a NFU policy. Insight gained from the British case will be applied to the broader argument of the thesis. There are limits as to how accurately Britain represents all the NATO European allies of the United States. Nonetheless, the British case is an important one precisely because of the closeness of the U.S./U.K. relationship and Britain's staunchness as an ally.

A. BRITISH NUCLEAR STRATEGY

Since the 1950's, Britain's nuclear strategy has remained remarkably unchanged. As characterized by the British, it has evolved into an "independent nuclear deterrent" capable of making a relatively small, but vital contribution to NATO's nuclear deterrent.¹¹² This section seeks to describe the underlying rationale of Britain's nuclear strategy by examining three of its key elements: nuclear doctrine, nuclear forces and Britain's special nuclear relationship with the United States. Of particular interest is to what extent this rationale has been changed by the end of the cold war.

¹¹²Lawrence Freedman, "The Strategic Context," in Britain and Nuclear Weapons (London: Macmillan, 1980), 127.

1. Nuclear Doctrine (1945-1990)

Britain's nuclear doctrine reflects a strategic way of thinking that has evolved over the last four centuries.¹¹³ It is worth commenting on two prominent characteristics that have become a seemingly permanent part of Britain's strategic culture and have therefore almost certainly influenced the calculation of their nuclear doctrine. The first characteristic is a reluctance to engage in open, theoretical debate, or what one analyst refers to as the anti-intellectual approach to strategy.¹¹⁴ The second is both the rarity and brevity of official statements on the role of Britain's nuclear forces.¹¹⁵ Further complicating any study of British nuclear doctrine is the fact that defense decision-making in Britain remains the responsibility of a small elite. Thus, much of what is written on Britain's nuclear doctrine has been inferred from policy decisions made by the government.¹¹⁶

Britain's nuclear doctrine has three main premises, each designed to guarantee self-preservation. First, the British recognize the uncertainty associated with the U.S. nuclear guarantee. In part this is due to the often erratic and unpredictable nature of U.S. politics. However, it also reflects an awareness that a nation will not act in a manner that would jeopardize the security of its own vital national interests.¹¹⁷

¹¹³For an account of the origins of British strategic thinking see E.L. Woodward, "The English At War," in Ernest Barker, ed., The Character of England, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1947): 529-549.

¹¹⁴Robin Ranger, "Understanding British Strategic Thinking: The Art of Muddling (And Mumbling) Through," Paper presented at the Conference of the International Studies Association, Philadelphia, 18-21 March 1981, 3.

¹¹⁵Freedman, 127.

¹¹⁶For an interesting discussion on Britain's defense decision making process see Margaret Blunden, "British Defence Decision Making: The Boundaries of Influence," in Margaret Blunden and Owen Greene, eds. Science and Mythology in the Making of Defence Policy (London: Brassey's Defence Publishers, 1989), 205-245.

¹¹⁷Ranger, 6.

The second premise is that Britain's independent nuclear forces provide a "second center" of decision making within NATO. According to a 1980 statement by the British Ministry of Defense, "the decisive consideration in favour of a British capability that is ultimately independent is the contribution it makes to NATO's strategy of deterrence and thus to our own national security."¹¹⁸ In addition to raising the uncertainty level for Soviet planners, Britain's "second center" role also reassures NATO members by providing a hedge against any uncertainties over the U.S nuclear guarantee.¹¹⁹

The third premise of Britain's nuclear doctrine is to retain some degree of influence over U.S. nuclear policy. The two most visible vehicles for this have been Britain's cooperation (under normal circumstances) with the U.S. Single Integrated Operational Plan (SIOP) and the Nuclear Planning Group. Britain's ability to authorize nuclear release independent of the United States provides a more subtle, yet significant degree of influence.¹²⁰

Britain's nuclear doctrine seeks to guarantee self-preservation by maintaining a credible independent deterrent dedicated to supporting the NATO alliance, yet capable of defending the vital interests of Britain.

2. Nuclear Doctrine (1990-1994)

Since the end of the cold war, Britain has conducted a series of major policy reviews which have created an entirely new conceptual framework for defense policy.¹²¹ The four explicit roles, which had been the hallmark of Britain's armed

¹¹⁸The Future United Kingdom Strategic Nuclear Deterrent Force (London: HMSO. 1980), 3.

¹¹⁹For a balanced assessment on the value of Britain's "second-center" role see Freedman, 127-133. See also Quinlan, "The Future of Nuclear Weapons," 492-493.

¹²⁰Ranger, 7-8.

¹²¹Sherard Cowper-Coles, "From Defence to Security: British Policy in Transition." Survival 36 (Spring 1994): 147.

forces since 1975, were abandoned in 1992 for three new overlapping roles. These were further elaborated on in the 1993 White Paper using the three New Defense Roles to provide an analytical framework for 50 'military tasks' for the armed forces.¹²²

Britain continues to define the maintenance of an independent national nuclear deterrent as necessary for underpinning its defense strategy, contributing to Alliance deterrent forces, and providing for the ultimate guarantee of Britain's security.¹²³ In the 1994 Statement on the Defense Estimates, the continued relevance of NATO for defense policy formulation is explicitly stated as a vital national interest.¹²⁴ It is significant that this Alliance rationale has in no way been diminished by the end of the cold war, and in fact remains the central element in Britain's nuclear strategy.¹²⁵

Despite the disintegration of the Soviet Union, British officials note, Russia is still the pre-eminent military power in Europe.¹²⁶ Additionally, the potential combination of Russian political instability and nuclear weapons is a grim prospect which cannot be completely discounted.¹²⁷ This said, the emergence of any direct threat to Britain's security in the short term is considered remote.¹²⁸ "Deterring specific threats thus gives way to talk of insuring against unspecified risks, and declarations of the need to thwart Soviet expansionism are replaced by cautious

¹²²Defending Our Future: Statement on the Defence Estimates 1993, Cm 2270 (London: HMSO, 1993).

¹²³Rifkind, Speech at King's College, London, 1.

¹²⁴Statement on the Defence Estimates 1994 (London: HMSO, April 1994): 18.

¹²⁵Lawrence Freedman, "Britain and Nuclear Weapons," in Michael Clark and Philip Sabin, eds. British Defence Choices for the Twenty-First Century (London and New York: Brassey's, 1993): 234.

¹²⁶Rifkind's speech at King's College, London, 13, and Statement on the Defence Estimates 1994, 19.

¹²⁷Freedman, "Britain and Nuclear Weapons," 236.

¹²⁸Statement on the Defence Estimates 1994, 7.

references to the need to counterbalance Russian military power."¹²⁹ It is therefore becoming increasingly difficult in the post-cold war environment to justify the "second-center" role of Britain's nuclear forces.

Throughout the cold war, the deployment of substantial numbers of U.S. troops in Europe and the maintenance of U.S. substrategic nuclear weapons on the soil of NATO allies served to reassure Western Europeans of the robust nature of the U.S. nuclear commitment. Given that the number of U.S. nuclear warheads in Europe has been reduced to roughly 10 percent of peak deployment levels while the number of U.S. troops in Europe may fall well below 100,000, uncertainty regarding the long-term credibility of the U.S. nuclear guarantee seems almost unavoidable.¹³⁰ Should this trend be perceived as likely to result in a U.S. disengagement from security commitments in Europe, the future of NATO could become questionable. Such extreme circumstances could lead to Britain's withdrawal from NATO's nuclear structure. The result for Britain might be a national nuclear force committed solely to the defense of Britain and British interests or efforts to work out limited bilateral or multilateral cooperative arrangements in Europe.

In January 1992, France's President Mitterrand opened the door to the possibility of developing a European nuclear doctrine. Rifkind embraced the idea of European cooperation in support of collective deterrence in his September 1992 speech in Paris. He was careful to emphasize that this was not a case of questioning the credibility of the U.S. commitment.¹³¹ A Franco-British Joint Commission on Nuclear Policy and Doctrine was established and made a permanent body in July 1993. In his King's College speech in November 1993, Rifkind noted that France

¹²⁹Witney, 104-105.

¹³⁰Freedman, "Britain and Nuclear Weapons." 233.

¹³¹Malcolm Rifkind, British Secretary of State for Defence, "Elargir La Dissuasion?" Speech given at a symposium in Paris (September 30, 1992): 14-19. For a more detailed account of the proposals for Franco-British nuclear cooperation, including a British perspective on the political advantages and disadvantages, see Witney, 105-107.

and Britain were in agreement on fundamental nuclear issues.¹³² However, as recently as May 1994, President Mitterrand indicated that any European nuclear deterrent posture would require the satisfaction of several conditions, including unity of political and strategic command and clear agreement on shared European vital interests, a process which would require "a century and perhaps two centuries."¹³³ This more moderate, long-term approach is also reflected in the 1994 French Defense White Paper. Nonetheless, the idea of future cooperation by Western Europe's two nuclear powers adds a new dimension to Britain's nuclear strategy.

Britain's nuclear doctrine has remained tied directly to the Alliance. However, the absence of an immediate threat has removed much of the rationale for maintaining a "second center" of decision making. On the other hand, as U.S. nuclear forces are withdrawn from Europe, it may become easier to justify both the retention of a national nuclear force and the development of a European nuclear doctrine. The latter is not likely to be defined in the near future, but both these factors in the nuclear equation must now be considered.

3. Nuclear Forces (Cold War Era)

Britain has structured its nuclear forces to maintain an adequate minimum deterrent capable of supporting national defense and NATO security requirements. Since the 1960s, the backbone of Britain's strategic forces has been four *Resolution*-class SSBN's armed with Polaris missiles. At least one SSBN has always been on patrol, but published reports in September 1994 suggested that Ministry of Defense officials are considering abandoning round-the-clock SSBN patrols, resulting in "a gap in Britain's nuclear deterrent cover." Royal Navy officials added that in order to

¹³²Rifkind speech at King's College, London, 8.

¹³³Extracts from a speech given by M. Francois Mitterrand on 5 May 1994 as discussed in Yost, "Nuclear Debates in France," 126-128.

retain the ability to resume permanent patrols, the need for four boats would remain.¹³⁴

Substrategic nuclear forces have been considered by Britain to be an essential component of deterrence since the 1950s. These have included nuclear artillery, Lance missiles and WE177 nuclear free-fall weapons capable of being delivered by Tornado, Buccaneer or maritime patrol aircraft.¹³⁵

4. Nuclear Forces (Post-Cold War Era)

Since the end of the cold war, Britain has been steadily cutting back its nuclear forces. The Lance missile, nuclear artillery and maritime tactical nuclear capabilities have been completely eliminated. The number of WE177 free-fall nuclear bombs has been more than halved, with the remainder due to reach the end of their service life early in the next century.¹³⁶ Four Trident SSBN's will replace the aging *Resolution*-class SSBN's beginning in the mid-1990s. The Tridents will be armed with the D-5 SLBM and will be configured for "split launch" in order to fulfill both the strategic and substrategic roles.¹³⁷ Thus, sometime after the turn of the century, Britain's nuclear capability will rest solely with the Trident force.¹³⁸

5. U.S./U.K. Nuclear Relations (1945-1990)

While understandably not a topic openly discussed, a central objective of Britain's strategy is to assure U.S. willingness to side with Britain if a war were to break out in Europe. Since they first offered to share the findings of the MAUD

¹³⁴Michael Evans, Defence Correspondent, "Britain May Cut Nuclear Patrols," The Times. London, 9 September 1994.

¹³⁵David S. Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 10.

¹³⁶Ibid., 10.

¹³⁷Statement on the Defence Estimates 1994, 19.

¹³⁸Witney, 108.

Commission with the United States in 1940, the British have gone to great lengths to cultivate a "special" nuclear relationship. The cooperation has reportedly grown to include joint nuclear targeting, intelligence-sharing and extensive technical collaboration. According to a former British civil servant, "the British will agree in principle with the U.S., even if they think the U.S. is completely wrong, and then, if necessary, implement the policy in such a way as to force its reversal."¹³⁹ Britain's struggle to retain the best of both worlds has led to a seemingly precarious balance between greater European integration and a privileged bilateral security relationship with the United States.¹⁴⁰

Another important consideration in U.S./U.K. relations is technical defense cooperation. This has been particularly true for strategic nuclear delivery vehicles. From the British perspective, a certain degree of strategic commonality further strengthens Anglo-American relations. "The main political argument for a U.S. system is keeping Britain's 'special relationship' with the United States as strong as possible and avoiding a choice that could imply a rejection of cooperation with the United States."¹⁴¹

6. U.S./U.K. Nuclear Relations (1990-1994)

The importance of preserving Britain's close nuclear relationship with the United States has remained paramount.¹⁴² This said, a number of problem areas have emerged since the end of the cold war which have strained Anglo-American relations. These differences have included friction over what actions, if any, to take

¹³⁹Ranger, 22.

¹⁴⁰Philip A.G. Sabin, British Strategic Priorities in the 1990's Adelphi Papers 254 (London: Brassey's, Winter 1990): 37.

¹⁴¹Yost, Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons, 10.

¹⁴²See Statement on the Defence Estimates 1994, Rifkind speech at King's College. London, 7, and Rifkind speech in Paris, 15.

in Bosnia; the admission of Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams to the United States; and the explicit U.S. recognition of Bonn as the leading power-center of Europe.¹⁴³

Nuclear relations between Britain and the United States have been most affected by two factors. The first is a growing trend in some U.S. elite circles toward delegitimizing nuclear weapons.¹⁴⁴ This view is not shared by the British, as Rifkind made clear in his King's College speech in November 1993.¹⁴⁵ Put simply, "the UK Defence Secretary implicitly rejects not only the idea that the role of nuclear weapons could now safely be suppressed in Western defence strategy, but equally rejects the notion that such a course of action would contribute to non-proliferation efforts by demonstrating to aspirant possessors that a nuclear capability was of little value in the post-cold war world."¹⁴⁶

The second factor is the prospect of a Franco-British nuclear deterrent. As was already discussed in a previous section, the British are extremely cautious when addressing this issue so as not to appear to be excluding or diminishing the value of a continuing U.S. role in Europe. It is apparent, however, that while the British do not openly concede the possibility of a diminishing U.S. commitment, closer nuclear cooperation with France represents a sensible hedging strategy.¹⁴⁷

Britain's nuclear strategy during the cold war remained remarkably constant. For nearly 30 years, the British maintained an independent nuclear deterrent capable of complementing NATO's deterrent. Any decisions affecting nuclear policy or

¹⁴³For a concise assessment of current U.S./U.K. relations, see Witney, 109-110.

¹⁴⁴For a more comprehensive examination of the factors contributing to a delegitimization of nuclear weapons in some Western elite circles, see David S. Yost, "The Delegitimization of Nuclear Deterrence?" Armed Forces and Society 16 (Summer 1990): 487-508, and Edward N. Luttwak, "An Emerging Postnuclear Era?" The Washington Quarterly 11 (Winter 1988): 5-15.

¹⁴⁵Rifkind speech at King's College, London, 2.

¹⁴⁶Witney, 101.

¹⁴⁷Ibid., 106.

doctrine were made by a small group of elite decision makers whose outlook was determined in part by U.S. and NATO nuclear policies and the desire to preserve the special U.S./U.K. nuclear relationship.

B. THE IMPLICATIONS OF NO-FIRST-USE

1. No-First-Use: Implications for Britain

If the United States were to adopt a NFU policy, it is highly unlikely that Britain would follow suit. Evidence for this judgement may be found in Sir Michael Quinlan's 1987 article. A career British civil servant who rose to serve as the Permanent Under-Secretary of State, Ministry of Defense, Sir Michael wrote,

A 'no first use' promise, if believed, would lighten the adversary's perception of risk and so stand to weaken deterrence. The underlying reality remains that it is not possible to arrange for major war to be conducted between nuclear powers or blocs without the possibility of nuclear use; and policies which attempt to remove that possibility by declaration are doomed to failure.¹⁴⁸

More recently, Defense Secretary Rifkind has unequivocally asserted Britain's continuing opposition to a NFU declaration. According to Rifkind,

The clear implication of any such (NFU) declaration would be that conventional aggression could be undertaken without fear of crossing the nuclear threshold. Put crudely, it implies, if it is believed, that conventional war is a safe option. For all its superficial moral attraction, therefore, a no-first-use declaration would take us out of the realm of war prevention and into the realm of war limitation.¹⁴⁹

Although upholding this position could theoretically jeopardize Britain's "special relationship" with the United States, it would not be entirely inconsistent with more recent trends in U.S./U.K. relations.

As opposed to the growing trend in some circles in the United States toward delegitimizing nuclear weapons. British policymakers continue to view nuclear

¹⁴⁸Sir Michael Quinlan, "The Ethics of Nuclear Deterrence: A Critical Comment on the Pastoral Letter of the U.S. Catholic Bishops," Theological Studies 48 (1987): 23-24.

¹⁴⁹Rifkind speech at King's College, London, 5.

weapons as contributing to the maintenance of peace and stability.¹⁵⁰ This position reflects legitimate long-term security concerns as well as the continued need to justify the huge investment made in developing a nuclear arsenal and the great power status it helps to confer.

There are two likely possibilities that would emerge from a U.S. NFU declaration. Neither is mutually exclusive and both are based on the premise that such a NFU pledge would be perceived as a continuation of an already apparent trend toward greater selectivity in U.S. policy regarding European security commitments.

The first possibility is that Britain would turn toward France. This would entail closer cooperation in developing a European nuclear doctrine and might be informed by multiple motives - for instance, removing German incentives for developing nuclear weapons as well as ensuring Britain's security.

The second possibility is that the NATO rationale traditionally used to justify Britain's nuclear forces would be diminished while the importance attached to the national aspect would be enhanced. This could, in turn, contribute to the dismantling of the Alliance if questions were raised about the continued viability of NATO.

It is doubtful that Britain would view NFU as anything but contrary to its national interests. Decisions would need to be made to assure the security of Britain's vital interests. Since Britain can no longer afford to "go it alone," some form of European defense cooperation would have to be sought. Depending on the nature of the specific security arrangements, this could upset the European balance of power.

2. No-First-Use: Implications for Alliance Cohesion

While it is doubtful that Britain would join the United States in endorsing a NFU pledge, it is almost certain that France would oppose such a pledge.¹⁵¹ This division between the Western European nuclear powers and the United States could

¹⁵⁰Ibid., 2-3.

¹⁵¹Yost, "Nuclear Debates in France," 129-130.

severely damage relations within NATO at a time when the very purpose of NATO is being redefined. In their response to Bundy, Kennan, McNamara, and Smith in 1982, four German analysts stated that a NFU policy "would destroy the confidence of Europeans and especially of Germans in the European-American Alliance as a community of risk, and would endanger the strategic unity of the Alliance and the security of Western Europe."¹⁵²

The notion that a U.S. NFU declaration could unify European national interests is questionable. As Mitterrand has suggested, the prospect of a united multi-national defense entity capable of offering nuclear guarantees in Europe is remote. Given this situation, if European defense integration was forced prematurely by a U.S. NFU policy, the stability of Western Europe could be jeopardized.

3. No-First-Use: Implications for Extended Deterrence

"NATO strategy has always been founded on the assumption that an extension of nuclear protection beyond the national sanctuary is possible."¹⁵³ This has probably been the single most consistently contentious issue in the history of NATO.¹⁵⁴ One of the pillars supporting extended deterrence is alliance cohesion. Some suggest that the solidarity of NATO is more a myth than reality and that distinct national interests dominate the Alliance.¹⁵⁵ While this may or may not be true, the perception of an underlying solidarity among NATO members has persisted.

¹⁵²Kaiser, Leber, Mertes, and Schulz, 1157-1170.

¹⁵³Thomas Enders, Holger H. Mey, and Michael Ruhle, "The New Germany and Nuclear Weapons," in Nuclear Weapons in the Changing World: Perspectives from Europe, Asia, and North America Patrick J. Garrity and Steven A. Maaranen, eds. (New York: Plenum Press, 1992): 132.

¹⁵⁴David S. Yost, "Europe and Nuclear Deterrence," Survival 35 (Autumn 1993): 99.

¹⁵⁵Betts, 699.

A U.S. NFU declaration which openly threatened alliance cohesion would weaken extended deterrence as well. This is particularly true from the French perspective, where "American adoption of NFU would only underscore what already needs little emphasis in France: the value of independence."¹⁵⁶

As a non-nuclear-weapon state, Germany is completely dependent on NATO and particularly the American nuclear umbrella. As such, Germany has been caught between the fear that the United States would be unwilling to commit itself in a European war for fear of nuclear escalation, and the fear that the United States would accept limited intervention, thereby confining a nuclear war to Europe.¹⁵⁷ A U.S. NFU declaration could be perceived by Germans as validating both of these fears. Another argument hypothesizes that Germany might be willing to accept "existential" U.S. nuclear commitments.¹⁵⁸ This would allow for the withdrawal of U.S. nuclear forces from German soil in exchange for some form of reconstitution arrangement.¹⁵⁹

4. No-First-Use: Implications for Nonproliferation

Just as alliance cohesion helps to reinforce extended deterrence, a credible extended deterrent can serve to strengthen the global nuclear nonproliferation regime. The two specific cases most relevant in today's security environment are Germany and Japan. In August 1991, Secretary of Defense Cheney observed:

If I look at Germany or I look at Japan, I see two nations that I hope will continue to be close allies of the United States...I would think (that) if the United States cuts

¹⁵⁶Sigal, 122.

¹⁵⁷Gert Krell, Thomas Risse-Kappen, and Hans-Joachim Schmidt, "The No-First-Use Question in West Germany," in John D. Steinbruner and Leon V. Sigal, eds. Alliance Security: NATO and the No-First-Use Question (Washington DC: The Brookings Institute, 1983): 152-154.

¹⁵⁸For a discussion of U.S./German relations and extended deterrence see Yost, "Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons," 18-21.

¹⁵⁹Ibid., 7.

back so much that all we can do and all we can talk about is defending the continental United States, we'll create an incentive for other nations that do not now feel the need to develop their own nuclear arsenals to do so.¹⁶⁰

This could also apply to other "virtual proliferators" such as Taiwan or South Korea, nations that are viewed by some analysts as perhaps disposed to seek nuclear weapons if U.S. commitments appear unreliable, or to some as yet unidentified potential nuclear proliferator.

While a U.S. NFU declaration might push France and Britain into closer nuclear cooperation, there is no evidence to suggest that Germany would view a European nuclear umbrella as an adequate substitute for a U.S. nuclear guarantee.¹⁶¹ Walter Slocombe asserted that "a unified Germany would not readily rely indefinitely on a British or French deterrent. The practical issue, therefore, is whether there will be U.S. nuclear weapons in Europe-or German ones."¹⁶² In 1985, Germany's State Secretary for Defence, Lothar Ruehl, said that the Federal Republic would welcome the protection of France's nuclear forces as a supplement to American and NATO nuclear protection, but not as an "alternative."¹⁶³ In a 1985 interview in International Defense Review, German Defence Minister Manfred Woerner stated that "France's nuclear capability is insufficient to protect the Federal Republic. We will

¹⁶⁰U.S. Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney, Address to the American Political Science Association, (August 29, 1991), in Yost, "Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons," 6.

¹⁶¹See for example Joffe, 73-82; Enders, Mey and Ruhle, 138-143; and Yost, "Europe and Nuclear Deterrence," 111-114.

¹⁶²Walter B. Slocombe, "The Future of U.S. Nuclear Weapons in a Restructured World," in Patrick J. Garrity and Steven A. Maaranen, eds. Nuclear Weapons in the Changing World: Perspectives from Europe, Asia, and North America (New York: Plenum Press, 1992): 63.

¹⁶³Lothar Ruehl, cited in David S. Yost, "Franco-German Defence Cooperation," chapter in Stephen F. Szabo, ed. The Bundeswehr and Western Security (London: Macmillan, 1990): 241.

have to continue to rely on the American nuclear umbrella."¹⁶⁴ Thus, if American nuclear guarantees were perceived in Germany as no longer sufficient, some German leaders might be inclined to consider pursuing a national nuclear weapons program. In essence, a U.S. NFU declaration could potentially disrupt the nuclear nonproliferation regime it was intended to strengthen.

C. SUMMARY

Using Britain as a case study, it is apparent that a U.S. NFU declaration could undermine the credibility of U.S. security assurances by promoting the perception of a U.S. disengagement from previous security commitments. While this is still viewed as a remote possibility, there is sufficient concern among Britain's political elite to begin contemplating possible hedging strategies. If a staunch U.S. ally such as Britain is concerned about the implications of a U.S. NFU declaration, it is reasonable to suggest that France, Germany, and other regional allies such as South Korea and Japan are concerned as well.

One analyst predicts that "the perception of a withdrawal of U.S. protection could raise incentives for some European states to seek nuclear weapons or to form coalitions to substitute for the alliance with the United States. The impression that the United States was disengaging from leadership responsibilities could stimulate a competition for primacy among the larger European states."¹⁶⁵ Western Europe has enjoyed an unprecedented level of peace and stability since 1945. The United States, with its extended security guarantees, has played a key role in safeguarding this stability. A return to the alliance system that existed during the first half of this century would be detrimental to both European and global stability.¹⁶⁶ A nuclear-

¹⁶⁴Woerner interview in International Defense Review, 18 (September 1989): 1393, cited in Yost, "Franco-German Defence Cooperation," 241.

¹⁶⁵Yost, "Europe and Nuclear Deterrence," 114.

¹⁶⁶For an insightful discussion on America's role in guaranteeing Western European security since the end of World War II, see Joffe, 64-82.

armed Germany would also have serious political consequences which could lead, once again, to the isolation of Germany.¹⁶⁷

A NFU pledge by the U.S. could undermine the credibility of U.S. nuclear commitments and erode alliance cohesion. This would increase the risk of nuclear proliferation and could precipitate instability in Europe. It is therefore in the interests of the United States to remain engaged in Europe. Politically, this means maintaining policies, including a first-use nuclear employment option, that help to reassure U.S. allies of the continued credibility of the U.S. nuclear commitment to their security.

¹⁶⁷Enders, Mey and Ruhle, 138.

V. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The previous three chapters examined some of the potential benefits and risks associated with a possible U.S. NFU declaration. It is important to reiterate that although the consequences of a NFU policy cannot be "proven" definitively in advance of its adoption, it is imperative to at least consider the possible implications and how these might affect U.S. national security. The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the potential shortcomings of both sides of the NFU debate. In view of these shortcomings, several proposals are made for mitigating their negative political and military impact.

The chapter is divided into three sections. The first considers the case where U.S. policy makers decide to preserve the nuclear first-use option. The potential consequences for U.S. nuclear nonproliferation objectives are reviewed and recommendations are made for minimizing any negative political impact.

The second section considers the contrary situation: where U.S. policy makers decide to adopt a NFU pledge. Again, the potential consequences are reviewed and proposals are made for addressing two fundamental concerns. First, how can the United States continue to satisfy its deterrence requirements? Second, what measures can be taken to reassure allies of the continued credibility of U.S. security commitments? The final section provides a summary of the findings of this thesis.

A. NFU REJECTED

According to press reports following the release of the Nuclear Posture Review, President Clinton has decided that the United States should retain the option of nuclear first-use. If this policy remains unchanged, NFU proponents hold, it could jeopardize U.S. goals for the NPT Review and Extension Conference. This section briefly reviews the potential negative consequences of rejecting a NFU pledge. This is followed by several proposals for minimizing the negative political impact of maintaining a first-use option. These proposals are primarily directed toward satisfying the concerns of developing countries, without jeopardizing U.S. interests,

since these countries are among the most vocal advocates of NFU and security assurances. Also, achieving the largest possible consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT depends substantially upon gaining the support of developing countries, because they account for approximately sixty-eight percent of all NPT signatories.

1. Consequences of Rejecting NFU

In rejecting NFU, the elevated stature of nuclear weapons is maintained, because it is implied that an important role for nuclear weapons still exists. It can be argued that the recently completed Nuclear Posture Review reinforces this perception by recommending that no major changes be made to the current U.S. nuclear posture.¹⁶⁸ Some developing nations will likely find this position to be unacceptable. They are looking for indications that nuclear-weapon states are actively seeking to deemphasize the importance of nuclear weapons. Why should non-nuclear-weapon states vow to refrain from acquiring nuclear weapons indefinitely, given inadequate security assurances by nuclear-weapon states and the increased potential for nuclear proliferation which could result from failing to deemphasize the importance of these weapons? The answer, of course, is that almost all of these nations have more important reasons for not seeking nuclear weapons than the presence or absence of security assurances such as NFU pledges. Most are not willing to assume the costs and penalties associated with becoming a nuclear-weapon state.

It is nonetheless probable that, if the United States is going to retain a first-use option and still hope to achieve a large consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT, additional measures will be required to satisfy the developing countries.

¹⁶⁸R. Jeffrey Smith, 1.

2. Minimizing the Negative Political Impact

a. Securing an Indefinite Extension of the NPT

The United States, as the predominant military power, must be prepared to take the lead in securing a large majority vote for an indefinite extension of the NPT in order to maintain the stability of the nuclear nonproliferation regime. To enhance this stability, according to two analysts, two factors must be addressed: "bolstering the security of threatened states, and erasing the image of special prerogatives for nuclear-weapon states."¹⁶⁹ Short of a NFU pledge, some form of positive and negative security assurances could be devised that would promote the interests of both the "haves" and "have-nots." Kathleen Bailey writes that "security assurances can do little to dampen the motivations for prestige or force projection, but they can be very effective in lessening the security concerns that may foster nuclear proliferation."¹⁷⁰ It is this idea of alleviating the security concerns of developing nations that the United States should focus on to win votes for the indefinite extension of the NPT.

Some observers have proposed that both positive and negative security assurances be recast to more accurately reflect current and potential future security concerns. In their view, these assurances should be made within the context of UN Security Council resolutions as opposed to separate treaties, which would be a difficult and time-consuming process. Since France and China have both recently signed the NPT, positive security assurances similar to those made in UN Security Council Resolution 255 could be declared jointly by all five permanent Security

¹⁶⁹George H. Quester and Victor A. Utgoff, "No-First-Use and Nonproliferation: Redefining Extended Deterrence," The Washington Quarterly 17 (Spring 1994): 112.

¹⁷⁰Kathleen Bailey, Strengthening Nuclear Nonproliferation (Boulder: Westview Press, 1993), 87. It should be noted that the author is referring here to security assurances in the sense of positive and negative assurances and not in the sense of, for example, article V of the NATO treaty, where an attack on one is considered an attack on all.

Council members.¹⁷¹ The wording of the resolution should remain similar to the 1968 version, it is argued, with one major exception: the new resolution should allow for action to be taken even if vetoed by one or more of the permanent members. Having all five members agree to the resolution strengthens the credibility of the guarantee. Removing the veto reduces the discriminatory nature of the assurance by making it possible to recommend that action be taken against any one of the five declared nuclear powers. The value in removing the veto, for some developing countries, might be that their concern over being subject to nuclear blackmail or even nuclear attack by one of the declared nuclear-weapon states could be alleviated. Some argue that the United States would benefit politically while still reserving the right to act unilaterally, if necessary. As noted by Bunn and Timerbaev, the text would constitute neither a legal promise of assistance nor an alliance.¹⁷²

Others have suggested that some degree of discrimination between nuclear and non-nuclear-weapon states is inevitable and, to some extent, even desirable. In a study entitled Power and International Relations published in 1962, Inis Claude stated that:

The philosophy of the veto is that it is better to have the Security Council stalemated than to have that body used by a majority to take action so strongly opposed by a dissident great power that a world war is likely to ensue.¹⁷³

This reasoning implies that if the veto were to be excluded from a resolution on positive security assurances, then at some point in the future, non-nuclear-weapon states could be called upon to wage a war against one or more of the declared

¹⁷¹See Bailey, 87-89, for a summary of instances where positive security assurances have played an explicit role in deterring nuclear proliferation.

¹⁷²Bunn and Timerbaev, 17.

¹⁷³Inis L. Claude. Power and International Relations (New York: Random House, 1962), 160. The author cites statements by Swedish and Indian representatives to help reinforce his argument for the rationale of the "Great Power Veto." See also Martin Wight, "The Balance of Power and International Order," in Alan James, ed. The Bases of International Order (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 113 for a similar justification for the Great Power Veto used by the British.

nuclear-weapon states. Non-nuclear-weapon states are more likely to be willing to accept the level of discrimination symbolized by the "Great Power veto," than the potential consequences of being dragged into war against a nuclear power.

Some observers have also suggested that negative security assurances be made part of either the same or a separate UN Security Council resolution. To make these assurances credible, it is argued, all five permanent members of the Security Council must agree on the text. This might be difficult to achieve, since they have been unable to achieve a consensus on the text for the last 16 years. In the context of the cold war, the United States and Russia each added distinct exceptions to their negative security assurances. The Russians vowed not to use nuclear weapons against a country so long as it did not have them on its territory, and so long as the country was a signatory to the NPT. The U.S. version was worded to exclude Warsaw Pact nations and other nations allied or associated with nuclear weapons powers, but it did include signatories to both the NPT or any "comparable internationally binding commitment."

In recent negotiations with Ukraine, the United States, Britain and Russia agreed to adopt essentially the U.S. formulation for negative security assurances. According to ACDA Deputy Director Graham, the same language should be used to try to persuade China and France to join.¹⁷⁴

While this may fall short of the unqualified, legally binding negative security assurances sought by many developing countries, having all five permanent Security Council members agree on the text for both positive and negative security assurances might reassure some non-nuclear-weapon states and improve the chances of achieving a large consensus for an indefinite extension of the NPT.

b. Justifying the Nuclear First-Use Option

If the United States is to retain the option of nuclear first-use, some observers contend, it must provide more compelling justification than was brought out

¹⁷⁴Arms Control Today Interview with Thomas Graham, Jr., 13.

in the Nuclear Posture Review. In essence, the review recommended that the U.S. nuclear force structure be maintained at the status quo in order to provide a hedge against a resurgent Russian threat. This was referred to by Secretary of Defense Perry as necessary for preserving a balance between leading and hedging.¹⁷⁵ The credibility of this line of thinking among some policy-makers in developing nations is likely to be minimal. It is conceivable that some will see the results of the Nuclear Posture Review as contrary to the spirit of article VI of the NPT (that is, progress toward nuclear disarmament), despite the enormous reductions underway under the auspices of the START treaties.

Two of the several reasons why the United States would want to retain the option of using nuclear weapons first deserve some attention at this juncture. The first is a general political stabilization argument, notably with respect to Western Europe. According to Paul Gebhard, "the diplomatic participation and military presence of the U.S. in Western Europe has helped to reassure states about the reliability and predictability of their neighbors."¹⁷⁶ This continued reassurance is vital to maintaining the integrity of the nuclear nonproliferation regime (see Chapter IV). Forward-deployed nuclear forces are a vital component of this reassurance. Quester and Utgoff observed that "even if strategic nuclear forces based in North America could just as effectively strike all targets, U.S. allies have historically been far more reassured by the physical proximity of forward-based forces and by the menu of consultations and joint planning activities that go with it."¹⁷⁷ Non-nuclear-weapon states must be made to realize the importance of a nuclear first-use option in

¹⁷⁵William J. Perry. "DOD Review Recommends Reduction In Nuclear Force." 2.

¹⁷⁶See Paul R.S. Gebhard, The United States and European Security (London: Brassey's, 1994), 15 for an outstanding account of why it is imperative for the United States to remain engaged in Western Europe from the perspectives of the United States, Britain, France and Germany.

¹⁷⁷Quester and Utgoff, 108.

maintaining stability in Western Europe and in other regions where U.S. allies and security partners are protected by U.S. nuclear commitments.

The second reason for the United States to retain the option of nuclear first-use is to have the flexibility to deter states that fall outside the NPT regime. This could be done through a separate declaration which would affirm the option to conduct strikes against non-NPT members or countries violating their NPT commitments. This might enhance the incentives for joining and complying with the NPT, reassure NPT signatories of the credibility of the U.S. commitment, and deter de facto nuclear-weapon states that are not NPT signatories from using nuclear weapons.

The combination of (a) renewed positive and negative security assurances made by all five declared nuclear-weapon states as part of UN Security Council resolutions and (b) a more credible rationale for retaining a nuclear first-use option might help to offset a rejection of NFU by U.S. decision makers. The negative political impact of rejecting NFU might be minimized enough to induce many developing countries to agree to an indefinite extension of the NPT. Negative and positive security assurances represent only one of many factors that will influence the decision-making of these states, however.

B. NFU ADOPTED

Despite reports of President Clinton's decision for the United States to retain a nuclear first-use option, the issue cannot be considered closed. This is true for two reasons. First, considerable external pressure continues to be exerted by non-nuclear-weapon states for non-use assurances by nuclear-weapon states. As the NPT Review and Extension Conference draws closer, non-nuclear-weapon states will enjoy increasing political leverage over nuclear-weapon states committed to securing an indefinite extension of the NPT. A second factor that could lead to a revision of U.S. nuclear-use policy is domestic politics. According to Quester and Utgoff, "such a

policy (NFU) has great political appeal in the United States as a part of the movement away from the nuclear balance of terror of the Cold War."¹⁷⁸

This section reviews the potential negative consequences of a decision by U.S. policy-makers to adopt NFU. Two of the institutions most affected by such a decision would be the U.S. military and NATO. Several proposals have been made for minimizing the negative political and military impact of a U.S. NFU pledge on these organizations. It should be noted that it is not the intent of this analysis to suggest that the United States should adopt a NFU policy. Rather, it is intended to illustrate that certain additional measures would need to be taken to ensure that the integrity of the global nuclear nonproliferation regime is maintained.

1. Consequences of Adopting NFU

The two issues most affected by a U.S. NFU declaration would be deterrence and alliance cohesion. From the military perspective, the ability to deter aggression would become a serious challenge if the credibility of U.S. nuclear commitments was questioned. This would require a comprehensive review of U.S. military strategy. NATO's nuclear posture would also require revision. Indeed, a U.S. NFU declaration could undermine deterrence by appearing to decouple U.S. interests from Europe. The resulting break in alliance cohesion could jeopardize the vital interests of the United States by promoting instability in Western Europe and opening the door for increased nuclear proliferation.

2. Minimizing the Negative Political and Military Impact

a. Deterrence Considerations

From a strictly military standpoint, deterring aggression has already become a serious challenge due largely to the post-cold war drawdown in U.S. forces. This point was explicitly made by the Army Chief of Staff, General Gordon Sullivan, in a 1993 interview with Army magazine. According to General Sullivan, "We (the

¹⁷⁸Quester and Utgoff, 103.

Army) are, in fact, doing things differently than we did in the past. It is, in fact, a power projection Army."¹⁷⁹ This reflects a definite shift in emphasis from forward presence to power projection of U.S.-based forces as the primary means of deterring aggression. The capability to deter a potential aggressor could be further undermined by a U.S. NFU declaration. The uncertainty component of deterrence would be greatly diminished since a potential aggressor might presume that the United States would respond conventionally to any attack not crossing the nuclear threshold.

Two remaining pillars of deterrence are credibility and a perceived willingness to resort to the use of force should deterrence fail. The credibility of conventional deterrence will rest on capability. There are two aspects to capability, demonstrated means and the potential for future technological enhancement. Conventional capabilities demonstrated during the Persian Gulf War have a significant deterrent affect in the short-term. However, the weakness of demonstrated capability for the long term is that nations have witnessed the capability and can, over time, develop either effective countermeasures or evasion techniques. According to Kathleen Bailey, "Not much is publicly known about how other nations may employ countermeasures to defeat conventional weaponry. However, many such measures exist, and most of them are cheaper than the systems they are designed to defeat."¹⁸⁰ Nonetheless, visible demonstrations of capability in terms of exercises or power projection do serve as a powerful reminder of U.S. conventional capabilities. Increasing the number and visibility of regionally-based, multilateral exercises is a critical component for demonstrating military capability. These exercises promote regional military cohesion and readiness, which are important for enhancing the credibility of conventional deterrence.

¹⁷⁹Interview with General Gordon R. Sullivan conducted by L. James Binder, Army 43 (April 1993): 18-19.

¹⁸⁰Kathleen Bailey, "Problems Facing Nuclear Disarmament," Paper presented at the conference on "The Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty: Review and Extension," (Livermore, CA: Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, 19-20 July 1994), 13.

While these policies should be applied to regions around the globe, Paul Gebhard points out that it is in the interests of the United States to capitalize on the commonality of interests of the NATO nations to achieve broader objectives. That is, in return for remaining engaged in European security, the United States should "seek a commitment from Western Europe to engage with the U.S. in defence of common security goals around the world."¹⁸¹ This appears much more feasible from a military vice political or economic perspective, but the same could probably be said of most regional military exercises in which the United States participates. Nonetheless, continued close military cooperation among NATO countries would reinforce the credibility of the deterrent force, which is based on capability derived primarily from compatibility and a history of joint and combined operations.

The second aspect of capability is maintaining an active program of developing advanced technologies for building superior conventional forces in the future. One of the most visible, yet effective ways for achieving this is through the pursuit of ballistic missile defenses. Lewis Dunn refers to a growing consensus for developing and deploying theater and regional ballistic missile defenses.¹⁸² This favorable perception is motivated largely by vulnerabilities exposed during the Persian Gulf War. Militarily, such ballistic missile defenses would greatly enhance the ability to deter a potential aggressor by allowing the United States to uphold its NFU pledge while providing a more secure retaliatory strike capability. An important secondary benefit is the ability to deter - or, at least, to counter - the use of chemical and biological weapons. If deterrence failed, such ballistic missile defenses would also provide at least a limited defense and thus help to prepare an appropriate retaliatory response. Other means for enhancing the capability of U.S. conventional forces should be pursued in parallel with the development of ballistic missile defenses.

¹⁸¹Gebhard, 37.

¹⁸²Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation," 17.

The second component of deterrence to address is a perceived willingness to use force. In this arena, advanced conventional munitions have a clear advantage over nuclear weapons. The United States has repeatedly demonstrated its willingness to use force. The true test of this willingness will come when the United States is confronted by a regional aggressor who is thought to already possess nuclear weapons. The question posed by some analysts is, how would the United States have reacted to Iraqi aggression in August 1990 if Saddam Hussein was known or suspected to have a nuclear arsenal?¹⁸³ The challenge for the military is to be prepared to act under such circumstances. This means developing effective countermeasures and exploiting the U.S. comparative advantage in advanced technologies. For deterrence to be effective, a potential aggressor must believe that the United States cannot be dissuaded from dealing firmly with threats to its vital interests.

In order to minimize the negative political and military impact of adopting a NFU policy, the U.S. military would need to improve the capability of its conventional forces and increase its perceived willingness to use that force to defend the vital interests of the United States. Capability can be demonstrated through regionally-based, multilateral exercises and continued advances in military technology, including ballistic missile defenses. In order to foster the perception of a willingness to use force in any threat environment, the U.S. military must work toward developing effective countermeasures, including advanced technologies.

b. Alliance Considerations

Chapter IV outlined the possible implications for relations with U.S. allies if a NFU policy was adopted. In addition to calling into question the U.S. commitment to European security, a U.S. NFU pledge could prove to be very divisive within NATO. The resulting instability in Europe could increase the risk of

¹⁸³See for example Quester and Utgoff, 107; and Dunn, "Rethinking the Nuclear Equation." 18-19.

nuclear proliferation, a risk that such a NFU pledge would be intended to diminish. According to Quester and Utgoff, "if such (U.S.) allies find that the U.S. extended deterrent (conventional or nuclear) can no longer protect them, the risks of nuclear proliferation by these states, and correspondingly of nuclear use, will rise."¹⁸⁴ It would therefore be imperative that, if a NFU pledge were made, U.S. decision-makers consider additional measures to reassure allies of the continued viability of the U.S. commitment to European security.

At least four measures could help to reassure allies of the continued robustness of the U.S. security commitment. First would be the selective transfer of advanced technologies. The primary advantage for the recipients would be a substantial savings in research and development costs. The potential advantage for the United States is that those technologies could be directed toward modernizing national forces so that U.S. allies would be better equipped and therefore more capable of accepting a greater share of the burden of the common defense.

The second measure would be additional multilateral military exercises. These exercises could enhance force interoperability, foster mutual understanding, and promote alliance cohesion - thus contributing to deterrence. If there is an established chain of command and an efficient and practiced command and control structure in place, the enhanced level of cohesive readiness could become an important factor for a potential aggressor to consider.

The third measure would be the development and deployment of ballistic missile defenses. If and when such systems become operational, they could be one of the most effective forms of reassurance for U.S. allies. To a limited extent, the potential effectiveness of ballistic missile defenses in reassuring an ally was demonstrated successfully during the Gulf War. Patriot missile batteries and military advisors were deployed to Israel to counter the barrage of Iraqi SCUD missiles and to reassure the Israelis of the credibility of the U.S. commitment to their security. The fact that the Gulf War never escalated beyond the conventional level

¹⁸⁴Quester and Utgoff. 105.

and that Israel did not become militarily involved may be attributed, at least in part, to the ability of ballistic missile defense systems to reassure allies while deterring an aggressor. Other factors may have been more important in dissuading the Iraqis from using chemical weapons, however - for instance, the reported Israeli nuclear threats and the ambiguous threats of retaliation articulated by some U.S. officials.

The final measure would be establishing a threshold for forward-deployed U.S. troops along the lines of a "Base Force Europe" or "Base Force Northeast Asia." Once the current drawdown is complete, a "permanent" level could be established for U.S. forces deployed overseas. To a large extent, the actual number of troops would be far less important than the stability of the commitment. Troop levels would fall below the prescribed level only if they were needed to respond to crises or to temporarily reinforce U.S. forces in another region. According to Paul Gebhard, the presence of U.S. military forces in Europe has several advantages above and beyond promoting stability. These include maintaining allied military capabilities, promoting increased interoperability, and boosting acceptance of a U.S. presence during peacetime to help secure access to European facilities during a crisis.¹⁸⁵ Having access to facilities in Western Europe could also provide the United States with a certain degree of influence in Eastern Europe, Russia and the Middle East.

By adopting these four measures, the United States would reassure its allies of the U.S. commitment to remain engaged in Europe. However, this would be only one step toward preserving the alliance cohesion necessary for reinforcing the credibility of deterrence. The question of how to resolve this dichotomy between a U.S. NFU declaration and NATO's current nuclear posture must also be addressed.

NATO's "New Strategic Concept" was announced in November 1991 following the meeting of the North Atlantic Council in Rome. While the concept

¹⁸⁵For a more detailed analysis of why a U.S. military presence should be maintained in Europe, see Gebhard, 38-44. While these arguments focus on Europe, many of them can be applied to close U.S. allies in other regions as well.

expressed hope for a new strategic environment that would better facilitate political and diplomatic solutions to emerging crises, the essential role played by nuclear forces was also underscored. Nuclear forces "continue to ensure uncertainty in the mind of any aggressor about the nature of the Allies' response to military aggression."¹⁸⁶ In contrast with the 1990 London Declaration, the New Strategic Concept did not explicitly refer to nuclear weapons employment as a "last resort." However, NATO still intends to foster uncertainty about the nature of a NATO response to aggression; and it is apparent that the first-use of nuclear weapons has not been ruled out.

A U.S. NFU declaration could undermine NATO's New Strategic Concept and could necessitate a revision of NATO's nuclear posture in order to preserve, at a minimum, the perception of solidarity. The challenge would be to revise the nuclear component of NATO's strategy without tearing apart the Alliance. It would not be feasible for the United States to incorporate NFU into its national nuclear posture while reserving the option for nuclear first-use when acting within the context of NATO. Therefore, for the United States to remain integrated into NATO's nuclear strategy, a premise still likely to be supported unanimously by NATO members, it would be necessary for NATO to adopt a NFU policy.

How could a NFU declaration by NATO be made politically acceptable to all North Atlantic Council members, in particular France, Britain and Germany? If the alternative to accepting a NATO NFU pledge was U.S. disengagement, Europeans would probably accept the shift in NATO's nuclear posture.¹⁸⁷ The potential consequences of total U.S. disengagement from European security commitments would probably be viewed as disastrous.

Alliance members, particularly Britain and Germany, would probably demand explicit reaffirmations of the U.S. commitment to both European security and

¹⁸⁶The Alliance's New Strategic Concept (7 November 1991), paragraph 55.

¹⁸⁷See Gebhard, 20-26, for European views on the U.S. role in European security.

NATO. U.S. policy-makers might, however, increase the acceptability of a NATO NFU pledge and demonstrate the continued robustness of the U.S. commitment to European security by implementing the four measures outlined earlier in this section. Specific steps could be taken to enhance the capability and interoperability of NATO's conventional forces, especially in terms of transferring certain advanced technologies and improving existing command and control mechanisms.

Whether Germany would be willing to accept a NFU declaration by NATO is questionable. According to one analyst, the Germans have adapted quite well, albeit sometimes begrudgingly, to some previous shifts in U.S. nuclear policy. Yost observed that "German-American relations regarding nuclear weapons matters may well, in other words, continue to represent a process of mutual accommodation to the boundaries of what is politically practical in each country."¹⁸⁸ Nonetheless, this observation concerned shifts in the level and character of U.S. nuclear weapon deployments in Europe - not a hypothetical U.S. NFU pledge. It would remain to be seen whether U.S. reassurances would be sufficient from the German perspective to reaffirm the credibility of U.S. nuclear commitments despite the U.S. adoption of a NFU pledge.

Adopting a NFU policy would alter the way the U.S. military approaches its deterrence responsibilities. In order to maintain a credible deterrent, the U.S. military would have to continue to improve its capabilities by incorporating the latest technologies into both offensive and defensive conventional weapons systems. Non-lethal weapons could be developed, exploiting the U.S. comparative technological advantage. Closer military cooperation on a regional level would promote greater military cohesion and readiness, thereby strengthening deterrence.

A U.S. NFU pledge would also alter the way the United States relates to its allies. It would necessitate adopting measures such as selected transfers of advanced technologies, a broader range of multilateral military exercises, the development and deployment of ballistic missile defenses, and establishing a threshold

¹⁸⁸Yost, "Western Europe and Nuclear Weapons," 19.

for the number of U.S. troops overseas in order to reassure allies of the U.S. commitment to their security. A fundamental shift in NATO's nuclear strategy would also be required. A NATO NFU pledge would need to be made acceptable to all the members of the alliance through a combination of political reassurances and improvements in conventional force capabilities. Whether the sum of these measures would be sufficient to compensate for the grave disadvantages for NATO of a U.S. NFU pledge is doubtful, however.

C. SUMMARY

As stated at the outset, one of the purposes of this thesis has been to assess the relationship between NFU and nuclear nonproliferation. While it is possible to suggest that such a relationship exists, one can only speculate as to its extent. Nonetheless, a decision by U.S. policy-makers to adopt a NFU policy based solely on the need to encourage developing countries to support the indefinite extension of the NPT would be shortsighted. Such a decision could severely damage America's relations with some of its closest allies. It would also increase the risk of nuclear proliferation, in contrast with the intended result. While several measures might be taken to help minimize the negative political and military effects of a U.S. NFU pledge, America's ability to afford and implement such measures is debatable. Moreover, such measures might prove to be insufficient to remedy all the harmful effects of a U.S. NFU pledge.

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